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CRITICISM IN AMERICA

I. THE ORIGINS OF A MYTH

by Seward Collins

As CHRONICLE AND COMMENT was saying in the March BOOKMAN, America has produced in the present century two men of supreme critical intelligence, Paul Elmer More and Irving Babbitt, who were rejected and, as it seemed, "killed off" by the emancipated generation that burst over the literary scene after the war, but who have recently resumed their place at the center of critical attention through the efforts of a growing number of adherents who find in their powerful defence of traditions and standards the only sound solution for contemporary chaos. One item in the broad indictment of the modern mind brought by the "new humanists"—as Babbitt, More, and their allies are known—has been the low level of ideas, standards and information prevalent in American letters in recent years. The reception accorded by the nation's press to the emergence of the humanists as a powerful factor in our thought and literature, particularly to their recent manifesto, *Humanism and America*, has provided the most complete proof imaginable of every charge the humanists have made, and many they never thought of making. The purpose of this article is to record some impressions of this reception—surely one of the most amusing, amazing and shocking episodes in the annals of our letters.

I do not want to seem to attach undue weight to the journalistic course of the reputation of More and Babbitt—their work is of a kind that is largely independent of these ups and downs in the press. The "smothering" of their work a dozen years ago was unimportant from any long view, not even preventing their contemporaries from finding their way to it, as the present attention testifies. Nor will the present journalistic *réclame* do more than speed this inevitable process to some extent. Nevertheless, one aspect of their work is certainly its relation to the shifting current of their own day, and some attention to this aspect may be not without value, quite apart from the amusement it provides.

The forces dominant in American letters throughout the late decade of the twenties have been, of course, quite right in combating the humanists as fiercely as they were

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able: there is a fundamental clash between them on nearly every point. Most BOOKMAN readers are doubtless familiar with the two positions from accounts that have appeared in recent issues. Broadly speaking the opposition is between those who sympathize with tradition and those who scrap tradition and favor novelty and "experiment". The new men, the men who set the tone of the twenties and still fill most of the landscape, had broken with the past and were assaulting it in diverse ways, under the influence of the late arrival on these shores of the anti-traditional currents that had been sweeping across Europe for several generations. Some of the twentyites attacked tradition in the Bohemian, bourgeois-baiting fashion, some from the basis of revolutionary social or psychological theories; others were chiefly concerned with esthetics but had the same dogmas and unexpressed postulates. Whether Bohemians, sociologists, esthetes, or mixtures, they all worked together to render the prevailing temper that of bidding the dead past farewell and starting out untrammelled on a fresh journey. (An attempt was made to describe the spirit of the period in the January BOOKMAN.) On the other hand, More and Babbitt had built up an elaborate body of work which was in part a counter-attack on the forces of disruption and in part practically a new basis for the traditional views. (See THE BOOKMAN for March.)

Now quite apart from the merits of the two positions, the most striking aspect of the whole situation is the violent contrast in the stature of the leaders of the respective forces. In power of thought, in breadth of scholarship, in force of presentation, it is being generally recognized that Babbitt and More operate on a plane far above any comparable work in English today and the equal of any in the world. None of their followers can yet match them, but a number are fine scholars and writers with deep philosophical and historical insight. On the other side, you find a multitude of nimble pens attached to improvised scholarship and floundering thought; a point of view, and a determination to make it prevail, but scarcely any weapons beyond their naked wits.

The natural result of this discrepancy is that in spite of the desire, and even the necessity, to fight the humanists, the anti-humanists are unable to meet them on the plane of ideas at all. For here they are beaten before they start. Not only are they outmatched in learning, in intellectual keenness, in dialectical skill, but their arguments have already been thoroughly demolished. Babbitt and More have met them all long before in the course of their exhaustive destructive examination of the roots of contemporary fallacies in the nineteenth century and the earlier period of preparation for it. Now of this fact the anti-humanists are at least to some extent aware. That is why they devote so little energy to trying to refute ideas, and so much to trying to make the ideas seem not worth refuting. They have been forced to fall back on the only possible way of combating ideas which cannot be refuted: attempting to kill them off by means of a gas-attack, or, more exactly, a myth-attack.

It is by means of a myth that the antagonists of humanism have sought to prevent it from reaching its potentially large audience. They have realized that if you can come between the public and a body of ideas with a cloud of ridicule and prejudice, you do not need to deal with the ideas themselves. Accordingly, they have bent their energies to distorting humanism into a caricature of it: they have created the anti-humanist myth. More correctly they have not created the myth: they have resurrected it. For it was by means of this same myth that the men of the teens who paved the way for the twenties accomplished the job of "shelving" Babbitt and More for the ensuing decade. The latest generation has dragged out the serviceable old myth, brought it up to date, greatly elaborated it, and filled the public prints with it in the

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hope that it will cloud over the real nature of humanism long enough for the energy of the renewed humanist aggression to fade away.

The nature of the anti-humanist myth will appear more fully in the sequel. It has many sides and innumerable details, but centers for the most part around one fundamental conception. Briefly, it might be called the Myth of the Nasty, Mean, Horrid Old Man. Its purpose is to associate the humanists with all the unpleasant emotions that have accumulated around age and around persons in authority—and after a hundred years of romanticism and nearly two hundred of general insurrectionism, how many such emotions and expressions of them there are! Much of the effect is achieved by use of the good-and-bad pairs of words which the romantic tradition has "loaded" heavily with sympathy for the ideas associated with "radiant youth": pairs such as critical vs. creative, repressive vs. liberating, intellectual vs. emotional, old vs. new, cold vs. warm, reason vs. imagination, business vs. art, narrow vs. broad, dogma vs. choice, reaction vs. progress, force vs. good-will, capital vs. labor, war vs. peace, authority vs. individualism, tradition vs. experiment, etc., etc., etc.

By means of these words almost indefinite changes can be rung on such ideas as that the humanists are hard-hearted old men determined to maintain their authority against aspiring youth; that they are fixed in ancient ways and petulantly annoyed with novelty; that they are arrogantly trying to elevate their own narrow preoccupations into universal edicts. Along these lines you soon arrive at the full-length Caricature of a Humanist just now so popular a commodity in magazines and newspapers: a sort of composite portrait of a stage "stern father", an elderly dyspeptic, a feudal baron, a timorous recluse, a snobbish landed gentleman, Scrooge, Squeers, and a prohibitionist as pictured by Rollin Kirby.

Since there is no basis for this myth in the facts of the case—beyond the emotional basis provided by the chronic feelings of the Bohemian toward the respectable, the revolutionary toward the traditionalist, and the esthete toward the man of sense—the simple facts have to be circumvented if the myth is to be effective. The elaborate parody of humanism that has thus been built up is the result of the concerted effort on the part of a large number of ingenious and opinionated minds playing over a voluminous and complex body of work in search of material to fit into the structure of a damaging myth. Truths, half-truths, quarter-truths, one-tenth truths, whole-cloth lies; mangled quotations, misrepresentative examples, distorting paraphrases, omitted contexts; all are grist for the mythopœic mill.

Perhaps I should point out that for the most part I am not here passing moral judgment on the handiwork of the myth-makers. Indeed that is not always easy. One cannot always decide in a given case whether a writer is being stupid, wilfully ignorant, inexcusably careless, illegitimately satirical, or deliberately dishonest. These various elements are almost inextricably blended throughout the literature of the myth, and can only occasionally be distinguished with any certitude. When, for instance, Burton Rascoe states that Babbitt believes that parents sometimes abandon their children because of reading Rousseau, he is obviously being merely stupid; since nobody with half a wit will believe so ridiculous a charge, even without reading the cited passage in its context to see what it really means. Again, when Edmund Wilson takes a passage in which Babbitt mentions a truism of the law of measure—namely, that you cannot mediate between first principles—and seeks to convey the impression that Babbitt is defending intolerance, he is presumably being wilfully ignorant; since with any effort he could have found out the subject of discourse. But on the other hand, what are we to say when, for instance, Malcolm Cowley and Llewellyn

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Jones make wholesale charges of anti-Semitism without being able to point to a single piece of evidence for it? or when V. F. Calverton so alters a passage in Babbitt as to make him appear something any reader knows he is not, namely, a protagonist of fascism and ultramontane Catholicism?*

But let us call all these fine shades of distortion simply—myth-making; and let us look for a little while into the growth of the great Anti-Humanist Myth. A full-length discussion of it would of course involve a complete analysis of the "modern mind", which the myth reflects so beautifully. All that can be attempted here is a rapid sketch of the main lines, beginning back in the decade 1910-1920, when the myth was first developed by the men who were preparing the way for the decade lately ended, the Turbid Twenties.

II

It is generally thought that H. L. Mencken should be given the credit for pushing the older conservative critics out of the center of the stage and making room for the new men. But a glance at the record during the years when the work was being done, 1915-1920, shows that actually he had no conception of the stature of More and Babbitt until the information was forced on him by certain outside events which I shall recount presently. As the typical Bohemian journalist he had always spoken scornfully of "professors" and "pedants", but they were all alike to him. In 1917, for instance, he was inveighing against "the Victorians, the crêpe-clad pundits, the bombastic word-mongers of the *Nation* school—H. W. Boynton, W. C. Brownell, Paul Elmer More, William Lyon Phelps, Frederick Taber Cooper". Not only could he not tell them apart, but he scarcely bothered to read them. Babbitt he missed entirely; only a single essay of More's seems to have come his way. He did, once, review a book of William Lyon Phelps's (on Browning), and found him "an able and persuasive writer". But on the whole the world was being made safe for Bohemianism by a blanket dismissal of any critic with an education, by such epithets as: "the prim virgins, male and female, of the *Dial*, the *Nation*, the New York *Times*", "the honorary pall-bearers of letters—bogus Oxford dons, jitney Matthew Arnolds, deceiving only themselves", "pale imitations of old artificialities, a thing of inane respectabilities".

In thus failing to grasp the fact that there were two men of the first importance publishing books under his nose which struck sledge-hammer blows at everything he stood for, Mencken was less perceptive than other members of the Bohemian wing of criticism. I don't know whether Huneker ever wrote about Babbitt, but William Marion Reedy appreciated his power as early as 1910, on the appearance of his second book. He wrote "Were I to reply to the question, what is the most important American book of the last ten years, I would name *The New Laokoön*, by Irving Babbitt, of Harvard. . . . Professor Babbitt is going to write a

* The passage which Mr. Calverton distorts (in the *New Masses*, April) is the opening paragraph in a long and closely reasoned chapter on "True and False Liberals" (*Democracy and Leadership*, p. 186). The paragraph in its entirety reads as follows:

"The choice to which the modern man will finally be reduced, it has been said, is that of being a Bolshevist or a Jesuit. In that case (assuming that by Jesuit is meant the ultramontane Catholic) there does not seem to be much room for hesitation. Ultramontane Catholicism does not, like Bolshevism, strike at the very root of civilization. In fact, under certain conditions that are already partly in sight, the Catholic Church may perhaps be the only institution left in the Occident that can be counted on to uphold civilized standards. It may also be possible, however, to be a thoroughgoing modern and at the same time civilized. Before considering this possibility more in detail, it will be helpful to trace the process by which the present situation has grown up, a situation that seems, at least superficially, to impose the extreme choice I have just mentioned."

In the first place, Mr. Calverton omitted "it has been said" in the first sentence, thus attributing to Babbitt the pair of alternatives which he quotes *only for the purpose of rejecting them*. Then Mr. Calverton broke off the quotation after "civilized standards", thus leaving out completely the very point that Babbitt was making.

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book on Rousseau and Romanticism. If it have a tithe of the acumen, the erudition, the eloquence, the humor, the wit, the bright, warm, plastic clarity of this volume, all of us, even the most intransigeant, will read it, though it strive to shatter all our towers of ivory". Needless to say, Reedy was fundamentally as hostile to Babbitt as was Mencken. He was expressing his wish when he went on to say "I think he will fall and fail, this brilliant aristocrat. . . . The revolt will go on. Anarchism is a great constructive force". (*Reedy's Mirror*, Sept. 8, 1910.)

Only once, so far as I know, has Mencken ever attempted to grapple with the ideas in the work of Paul Elmer More, and that occasion had an accidental origin. Mencken's youthful crush on Friedrich Nietzsche had led him to write a book on him and to constitute himself a sort of authority in the field. For years in the *Smart Set* the only books of any intellectual interest he ever discussed were books on Nietzsche, who seems to have provided his whole philosophical education; the rest of the time Mencken was merely ploughing through the run of commercial trash, judging it gravely or selecting subjects for his vaudeville. In the course of preparing a new edition of his Nietzsche volume (1913), Mencken came on More's study of Nietzsche (originally issued as a small book; now one of the essays in *The Drift of Romanticism*), and incorporated a discussion of it in his chapter on Nietzsche's critics. The result was one of the most grotesque and pitiful efforts at criticism ever seen. First he tried to state More's views: but he had no idea what More was talking about. Then he tried to rebut, and fell into even deeper fatuity. I urge anyone who doubts this to read More's essay and then compare it with Mencken's "digest" of it (if he can find a copy of *The Philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche*).

But even more interesting than Mencken's failure to understand the essay was his failure to recognize it as anything different from the numerous other studies of Nietzsche that were then appearing—along with appreciations of Bergson, Maeterlinck, Eucken, Shaw, and the other prophets of a bygone day. There is not even a smart snort at More; only a polite attempt at disagreeing. He even granted that More's thesis was "very ingenious". This was in 1913. In 1917 Mencken had changed his tone. More's "ingenious" essay, worthy of calm exposition and refutation, has suddenly become his "staggeringly ignorant 'criticism' of Nietzsche". A few months later, he says of *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, "Tackled by More, it became no more than an absurd student's exercise, illnaturedly corrected". Again, "Read More on Nietzsche if you want to find out just how stupid criticism can be, and yet share the outward forms of sense". At the same time, More's name began to figure with increasing frequency in his diatribes, and Babbitt's name was added to his list of "solemn, highly judicial, coroner's inquest" critics.

What had happened to make Mencken aware there was something beside dull pedantry and amiable respectability to be overcome if his views were to prevail? Two things: Stuart Sherman had begun to translate the ideas of Babbitt and More into language that even Mencken could understand; and another school of critics, more serious and more sensitive, had begun to get into action, making the demolition of the older critics one of their major aims.

Mencken's personal success, culminating in his great popularity during the middle years of the last decade, has somewhat obscured the reputation of two men whose work was at least as important as his in preparing for the 1920's, and is showing greater lasting power. While Mencken's kind of criticism is dying as the force of his own writing and the audience for it diminish, the work of Randolph Bourne and Van Wyck Brooks still seems able to attract new disciples, and their views might be said to be in the ascendency in this country just now. Born the same

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year, they were just under thirty when their ardent, lofty, sensitive natures and brilliant pens began to be felt in our criticism, around 1915. They were the inevitable adversaries of More and Babbitt. Mencken's Bohemianism was merely the obverse of the respectable, unimaginative, provincial gentility above which conservatism has seldom risen in this country; it was as though Mencken had formed his mind by reading the *Outlook* and thinking the opposite to Lyman Abbott and Hamilton Wright Mabie, never dreaming that their position could be given a powerful intellectual basis. On the other hand, Bourne and Brooks succumbed early and completely to the whole radical collection of ideals, and quickly sensed (it hardly amounted to conscious recognition) that More and Babbitt were not mere agents of respectability, but dangerously able spokesmen for tradition.

Both Brooks and Bourne drank deeply of the messages of the various prophets who were attracting the bright young men of the time—Wells, Shaw, Nietzsche, Dewey, especially. They went in also for the "mysticism" of the day, in the person of "Maeterlinck, the best of modern mystics", as Bourne called him. "His influence on our time is so great because we believe that he is a seer, a man with knowledge of things hidden from our eyes. We go to him as to a spiritual clairvoyant—to have him tell us where to find the things our souls have lost." Brooks's admiration for Maeterlinck was no less ardent, if characteristically more bombastic and confused: "Maeterlinck is the most significant figure in our spiritual world today, because, in preserving the harmony between man and the universe, he points out the possible, the necessary reconciliation of the world-economy and the universe-economy. He has at last built a bridge between the poet and political economist".

But the most positive and pervasive element in the minds of both men was the result of their early conversion to the great pseudo-religion of our day: the gospel of humanitarianism: the belief that mankind in the lump can somehow be elevated by a miraculous new science called sociology, the search for social justice, successor to that ancient fallacy called ethics, the study of personal justice; the belief that if the landscape is only taken care of, souls will take care of themselves; the belief, in a word, that man is born free but is everywhere in chains imposed by the past. "Socialism flows from this as light flows from the sun," said Brooks at the conclusion of *America's Coming-of-Age*. "The Socialists have the solution," said Bourne. "Abolish this hostile attitude of classes toward each other by abolishing class-struggle. Abolish class-struggle by abolishing classes. Abolish classes by merging the classes into one." Just like that.

Beside their socialism and their conviction that the world could be made over in pretty short order if only the past were thoroughly repudiated and the future sufficiently yearned towards, both men fell into two smaller errors which run through their work: unhistorically identifying Puritanism with repression, gloom and money-grubbing; confusing anti-Philistinism with social criticism. These two errors, of course, they shared with Mencken, who indeed has built most of his career around them.

Bourne was a simpler personality than Brooks: believing everything very hard, writing it passionately and with transparent lucidity, carrying everything to logical conclusions. This last would seem to be a fatal procedure for a disciple of the greatest source of sophistry of our day, John Dewey, but Bourne was an undaunted Deweyite until nearly the end—and even then his defection was only because Dewey was not a pacifist when his country was at war! Bourne summed up in his person the romantic idea of *youth*; he was, as Brooks said of him after his untimely death, "the flying-wedge of the younger generation". As it seemed to Bourne, "In this conflict between youth and its elders,

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youth is the incarnation of reason pitted against the rigidity of tradition. . . . These are the questions and the challenges that youth puts to its elders, and it is their shifty evasions and quibbling that confound and dishearten him. . . . The whole philosophy of youth is summed up in the word, Dare! Take chances and you will attain! The world has nothing to lose but its chains and its own soul to gain! . . . I am often impressed with the fact that the older generation has grown weary of thinking. It has simply put up the bars in its intellectual shop-windows and gone off home to rest. . . . As I see the older generation going through its daily round of business, church, and family life, I cannot help feeling that its influence is profoundly pernicious". One gets the impression that Bourne was made ill by the sight of anyone over thirty-five, with the exception of John Dewey.

Dewey's ideas on education seemed excellent sense to him: "But why bother with Greek when you could get Euripides in the marvellous verse of Gilbert Murray?" He called Murray "the greatest Greek scholar of his age", and praises him for having "gone with all his students over into the sociological camp". Bourne's views on moral education were divinely simple: "When moral instruction is given, a criminal advantage is taken of the child's suggestibility, and all possibility of an individual moral life, growing naturally and spontaneously as the young soul meets the real emergencies and problems that life will present it, is lost. . . . Only those who have been allowed to grow freely like young plants, with the sun and air above their heads, will get the full beauty and benefit of youth. Only those whose eyes have been kept wide open ceaselessly learning the facts of the material and practical world will truly appreciate the values of the social world, and be able to acquire virtue".

I give these extensive quotations to illustrate the quality of the thinking of almost the most influential of the young men who "disposed of" More and Babbitt in the decade of ferment. It can be imagined what a monster of cruelty, depravity and stupidity he would consider anyone who went to other sources of light than Marx, Nietzsche, and Dewey. The first shot in the encounter I am tracing might be said to have been fired when Bourne reviewed More's study of Nietzsche, in 1912 (in the *Journal of Philosophy*). First Bourne complained of Nietzsche's being subjected to the unworthy process of sober philosophical and historical criticism at all; it seemed a sacrilege. Then he adopted the authentic tone of the anti-humanist myth-maker: "No one would recognize in the shrunken, frock-coated Nietzsche of Mr. More the wild blasphemer who, etc. . . . The author even has the suggestion of an apology for Nietzsche's atrocities, and a little patronizing pity for his rage: how Nietzsche would have hated being apologized for or pitied!"

Aside from the separately published essay on Nietzsche—Nietzsche was a tender subject with the bright young men—More's 1913 volume, *The Drift of Romanticism*, failed to attract their attention; though one would think that the studies of Pater and Huxley would have been recognized as equally apposite to their interests. But his volume of 1915, *Aristocracy and Justice*, played right into their hands, as indeed it was clearly intended to. It was a direct counter-attack on the wide-spread assault on tradition being made from all sides in government, economics, morality, education; the assault which was appealing to the young men with its revolutionary novelty, but which More had for years been tracing from its distant origins down through its leading figures, of whom the prophets of the day were but attenuated echoes. *Aristocracy and Justice* was the ablest and most eloquent defence of tradition that had been written in English for decades, and Bourne with characteristic impetuosity met its challenge head-on in a lengthy review in the *New Republic*.

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As a thorough-going revolutionist and ecstatic humanitarian, Bourne naturally made a clean sweep of More's whole position. "The color of Mr. More's style cannot keep the claws of class-exploitaton from showing through. . . . Mr. More's ideal is a slave-society, as the Greek state to which he always reverts was a slave-state." Bourne was particularly annoyed with More for seeking wisdom among the Greeks: "This continuing to live in the America of 1915 among the political and moral problems of an Attic Deme would be comic if it was not pathetic. . . . His narrow preoccupation with the Greek classics has prevented him from seeing the color and forms of that sociological world which men are now eagerly studying and in which they seem to find all the imaginative lift and intellectual discipline which their fathers got from the classics". More's conviction that property must continue to be in the future what it has admittedly been throughout history, the basis of civilization, seems of course to the socialist a cruelly blind perversion, which Bourne arraigned thus: "For what we have learned in our American experience is that property rights cannot be put above human rights unless humanity itself becomes property".

Notice the highly emotional accusations which Bourne devised: that More believes in a slave-state, and that he puts property values above human values. Both of these charges instantly became part of the anti-humanist myth and have been repeated times without number ever since; you will doubtless find them in half-a-dozen current magazines. In the course of the review Bourne made his own stand clear in one of those charmingly naïve flights that carried his premisses all the way through: "We see life now rather as an incalculable and importunate stream of desire, which rises in the adult to a will-to-power. The problem of the soul becomes the direction of this desire and energy into creative channels, not its suppression or even control by that reason which is so often a mere disguise of another and more acceptable desire. In such a world, personality becomes more desirable than character, creative expressiveness than self-control, coöperation than justice, social freedom than rights". (Surely Bourne meant "duties" instead of "rights".)

That was in 1916. In the next two years, his most productive and his last, Bourne turned often to the older critics and their shortcomings. The ideal critics for whom he hoped he once described thus: "They would be men who had not been content to live on their cultural inheritance, but had gone out into the modern world and amassed a fresh fortune of their own. They would be men who were not squeamish, who did not feel the delicate difference between 'animal' and 'human' conduct, who were enthusiastic about Mark Twain and Gorki as well as Romain Rolland, and at the same time were thrilled by Copeau's theatre". Manifestly the older critics did not measure up to these requirements, and so Bourne turned his passionate eloquence to the task of getting rid of them.

"The older critics," he said, "had long since disavowed the intention of discriminating among current writers. These men, who had to have an Academy to protect them, lumped the younger writers together as 'anarchic' and 'naturalistic', and had become, in these latter days, merely peevish and querulous, protesting in favor of standards that no longer represented our best values. . . . Read Stuart P. Sherman on contemporary literature and see with what a hurt panic a young gentleman, perhaps the very last brave offshoot of the genteel tradition, regards these bold modern writers from whom his contemporaries derive. . . . When professors had devoted scholarly lives to the classics only to exhibit in their own polemics none of the urbanity and intellectual command which were supposed by the believer somehow to rub off automatically on the faithful student, [one] had to conclude an

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absence of causal connection between the 'classics' and the able modern mind".

The assortment of colorful epithets, as we see, was being rapidly enriched by Bourne's inventive mind: squeamish, out of touch with the modern world, timidly united, peevish and querulous, defenders of obsolete values, terrified by bold moderns, bad-tempered in debate. All these are still with us. It should be set down to Bourne's credit that as he sensed the power of Babbitt and More, so he recognized the sterility of Mencken. "Crusaders like Mr. Dreiser and Mr. Mencken have dealt loud enough blows, but they beat up a straw man of Puritanism. . . . Art always has to struggle with the mob, and Mr. Mencken's discovery that it has to struggle in America is a little naïve. . . . Mr. Mencken deserves everything Mr. Sherman says about him, because in his rather self-conscious bluntness he makes literary art sound like vulgarity". In this quotation Bourne appears to see through not only Mencken, but the confusions about Puritanism and anti-Philistinism as well. But this insight does not pervade his writings, and indeed seems to date from only a few months before his death. But he never fell into these errors in the wholesale way of Van Wyck Brooks and numerous others.

III

If Bourne was so clear and logical that his own statement of his views was often their sufficient satirization, Brooks has always been preëminent for the vagueness and intangibility of his thinking. Even where he is not, as he frequently is, idiosyncratic to the point of unintelligibility, his presuppositions are so deeply buried and his lack of logic so obscured by strong emotion that it takes considerable digging to reach his real meaning. His mind as revealed in his writings is surely one of the most incoherent that ever got nine books published and acquired a reputation in criticism. At the same time, his writing is always verbally deft, often brilliant, carrying the sympathetic reader along with constant plausibility. It is only the unsympathetic reader who is annoyed by the addiction to half-truths and *non sequiturs*, the generalizations that don't come off, the constant whining note, the endless rhetorical questions which provoke him to reply perversely, the profusion and confusion of metaphors. What one finds in Brooks is a brilliant pen, a confused mind, a powerful emotional overflow, unrevealed premisses: this combination gave him his great effectiveness with a generation who felt in tone with the mood in which he wrote.

To bring a semblance of order out of Brooks's ideas would demand a paper as long as this one. Such a paper will probably never be written: his work is dying so fast that there is no need for it; already his principal books are read chiefly as historical documents in the formation of a period that has come to an end. At the same time, his influence has been so great during the last fifteen years and particularly in the events that I am sketching—the supplanting of the old criticism by the recent—that some analysis of his methods seems called for. It will be sufficient to touch on the two books which he published during the crucial half-decade, 1915-1920, and which contained the heart of his work, *America's Coming-of-Age* and *Letters and Leadership*.

As Walter Lippmann said in reviewing *America's Coming-of-Age* in 1915, "the book is not an argument, which can be accepted, or refuted, or left for dead. It is gifted conversation. . . . You like Mr. Brooks or you don't, for what he exposes is a temperament". It seems a shame to interrupt this gifted conversation, but let us see if in spite of Mr. Lippmann some traces of an argument cannot be found. The theme of the opening chapter is the double theme which recurs throughout Brooks: American culture is low; America is preoccupied with money-making and material ideas, a one-sidedness that pre-

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vents the full development of personality. These complaints, which nobody but a complacent Philistine would dispute, form the element of truth which has given Brooks's criticism its plausibility and its effectiveness in spite of the highly disputable and often demonstrably false elaboration which he has so abundantly provided.

The connecting thread through this first chapter is a description of American life as having two divisions, symbolized by the figures of Jonathan Edwards and Benjamin Franklin, "The imminent eternal issues the Puritan felt so keenly, the equally imminent practical issues they experienced so monotonously". Here again he has hit on a piece of observation which is unexceptionable: Leslie Stephen, and doubtless many others, had long before used these two eighteenth-century figures as typical representatives of two leading elements in American life. Reading on, one begins to wonder at finding these two trends—which are certainly incomplete as ways of life—wholly condemned as "equally undesirable, equally unsocial". One begins to rebel when they are simplified into a violent and gloomy bifurcation: "Desiccated culture at one end and stark utility at the other have created a deadlock in the American mind, and all our life drifts chaotically between the two extremes"; the overwrought language makes one suspicious. It becomes apparent that a caricature-with-a-purpose is being drawn when these two tendencies are said to make the American college "a place where ideals are cherished precisely because they are ineffectual, because they are ineptly and mournfully beautiful, because they make one cynical", where the student "has been encouraged to assume that the world is a stamping-ground for every untrained, greedy, and aggressive impulse in him, that, in short, society is fair play for what he can get out of it. . . . There surely is the last and most impenetrable stronghold of Puritanism, . . . which persists in making the world a world inevitably sordid, basely practical".

As the picture of "business" and its ideals advances from caricature to mere silliness, as the heaping of blame on the Puritans reaches the fantastic, the reader realizes that these two subjects have some special significance for Brooks. All this passion must spring from something more than a dissatisfaction with American money-grubbing, a dissatisfaction with the "inept sublimities" of Puritan theology, even if these have produced, as Brooks states, "the unreality of most contemporary culture". A little further on, the pursuit of wealth is explained as "force of habit, the sheer impetus and ground-swell of an antiquated pioneering spirit" which finds personal outlet in "a continued economic self-assertion". The introduction of the word "pioneer" confirms one's feeling that the case against the Puritans is being ingeniously "fixed". It is a commonplace that in a new country culture lags and practicality is at a premium; the pioneer's notorious lack of cultivation is considered excusable. By referring to the early settlers of New England as Puritans not only when their theology is referred to, but their work as pioneers as well, the inevitable meanness which is excused in the pioneer can be made to seem a part of Puritanism and used as an added reproach. This double connotation is found throughout Brooks, and in numerous other writers.

It is the phrase "continued economic self-assertion" which puts us on the track of Brooks's underlying purpose. On the next page it is further explained by being contrasted with what Brooks considers its opposite: "Because it was so long the law of the tribe economic self-assertion still remains to most Americans a sort of moral obligation: while self-fulfillment still looks like a pretty word for selfishness". This pair of alternatives, in the sense in which Brooks uses them, is the clue to his whole state of mind and his whole body of writing. Any sort of reform, he says, will be futile "unless self-fulfillment as an ideal can be substituted for self-

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assertion as an ideal. On the economic plane that implies socialism". Now "socialism" is a vague word, even in far less vague hands than Brooks's. But the collectivist ideal it stands for is based on a familiar theory: that most of the ills of life flow out of private enterprise and private property; that the cure is the communization of property and the substitution of the common good for private gain. And this is what Brooks means by his vague, emotional terminology. "Self-assertion" stands for private enterprise and property, "self-fulfillment" stands for all the good things for everybody that will come with their abolition.

How are they to be abolished? There is no reason to demand that Brooks be a practical revolutionist as well as a critic, but as his criticism is based on a philosophy of social change it is interesting to note his idea of a method, as outlined at the end of this same chapter we are examining (the present tense he breaks into should perhaps be called "the present of ecstatic anticipation"): "Self-fulfillment through science, or literature, or mechanics, or industry itself—the working out of one's own personality, one's own inventiveness . . . gives a man through his very sociality, through the feeling he has that as a good workman he is coöperating with all other good workmen, a life interest apart from his rewards. And as this principle becomes generally diffused and understood the incentive is withdrawn from economic self-assertion . . . and the wealth of the world is already socialized". Was there ever a vaguer or more mawkish program for the revolution?

But the point here is not Brooks's campaign of action, but his view of human nature. Socialism flows from the conviction that if the social structure is changed, the life of individuals will be improved. In other words it puts the blame for evil on "society" and considers the individual inherently good; in the rightly organized state a man will be satisfied with his feeling that he is, in the phrase quoted above, "coöperating with all other good workmen" for the state will, as Brooks puts it, "substitute for the inhumane stimulus of competition the humane stimulus of fellowship". This question of which kind of dualism a man believes in—whether of good and evil in the heart or of good in the heart and evil in society—is fundamental; on his answer to it depend a man's views of everything else. Brooks's answer, we have seen, was unequivocal—as unequivocal as he gets; one has to bring together scattered phrases to show his meaning. He rejects the dualism that is at the center not only of Christianity, but of most of the important historic ways of life: he accepts the conception of dualism which has sprung up in the last two centuries: the dualism which seeks to project the evil inherent in the human breast out onto society and the landscape, or "environment".

Now all this may seem far away from Van Wyck Brooks the literary and social critic, who after all devoted little space to economics and none to "dualism". But the point is that it is actually the key to everything he has ever written. Only thus can be understood the hatred of "business" and "Puritanism" which colors not only this first chapter of *America's Coming-of-Age*, but all of his work, and has provided the drive behind his influence. It should be clear that when he is inveighing against "business", "economic self-assertion", "the law of the tribe", or, later, "possessive impulses", "acquisitive instincts", and "the pioneer law of self-preservation", he is not complaining of the excesses of modern industrialism; he is attacking the whole traditional structure of society. Again, in his onslaught on Puritanism he was rightly selecting the chief enemy of his views: the strongest religious impulse in America which retained the insight of the great traditions. He was not attacking the Puritan excesses and limitations; he was not, that is, attacking them for their peculiarities, but for what they had in common with the main

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Christian and other traditions: a conception of human nature implacably hostile to his own.

I am not trying to damn Brooks by calling him a revolutionist. I am emphasizing his underlying beliefs for two reasons: to show the quality of thinking behind the most influential criticism of our day; and to show those of his admirers who do not share his postulates, may not even have noticed them, that *unless* they accept them his criticism is invalid for them; or only occasionally and accidentally valid. For his whole work has consisted of finding formulas to propagate his central notions, and of building documents to support them. His original contribution to criticism has been his ingenious translation of the prevalent revolutionary ideas of modern Europe into American terms. He has brilliantly turned to account the two distinctive aspects of our life, both of which lent themselves perfectly to his purpose: the fact that private enterprise has in America run to excesses never seen elsewhere; and the fact that the sound religious insight of the Puritans was almost inextricably mingled with the fantastic, inhuman theology of Calvin and with a mass of crippling secular prejudices brought from their English background. The defender of tradition in this country finds himself at every turn running into these two facts as colored for anti-traditional purposes; it is Van Wyck Brooks who has contributed the most to this effect.

A glance at later chapters in *America's Coming-of-Age* will show how Brooks applied his basic theories. The second chapter is a rapid survey of "classical" American literature; it is his best known piece, and contains probably the best writing he has ever done. Right at the beginning you come on a typical Brooksian trick. "Something, in American literature, has always been wanting—every one, I think, feels that," you read. Aside from Whitman there is no writer "who comes home to a modern American with that deep, moving, shaking impact of personality for which one turns to the abiding poets and writers of the world. A certain density, weight, and richness, a certain poignancy, a 'something far more deeply interfused', simply is not there". This phrasing of the simple fact that America has not produced one of the supreme writers is designed to give the reader the impression that America is in some unique and dismal predicament, of which Brooks is about to reveal the secret cause. (Not to mention the large question whether *any* country has had a "supreme" writer in the time of our national life.)

The "cause" quickly appears, after a tribute to Thoreau, Emerson, Poe and Hawthorne. "Not one of them, not all of them, have had the power to move the soul of America from the accumulation of dollars; and when one has said this one has arrived at some sort of basis for literary criticism." One has not. One has merely arrived at a formula for discrediting all the great writers of our past; not to speak of all the great writers who have ever lived and everyone else under the sun. Brooks proceeds quickly to his thesis, that our writers' function has been to minister to the "law of the tribe", which was "plainly enough the pioneering instinct of economic self-assertion"—our old friend. In other words, none of our great writers has been opposed to private property and private enterprise.

Brooks passes our writers in review from this basis and, naturally enough, down they go, one by one. Irving, Cooper, Bryant and Longfellow were entirely "satisfied with things as they are", and devoted themselves to nothing more than making a raw new country "a place of reasonable charm and contentment"; the last two, moreover, sometimes pointed morals. Hawthorne "as a social being was more than commonly conventional"; in politics he was "always on the uninteresting side". Emerson, like all the Transcendentalists, "was incapable of an effective social ideal". His individualism merely

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encouraged ruthless commercialism and its by-products. The other side of his individualism, his spiritual insight, could not influence his capitalistic era; but this Emerson did exist, "the gentle chime-like Emerson, who in days to come will sound and chime over a better world". (Is Emerson a favorite in Russia?) George William Curtis "in his social criticism betrays the incurable boyishness of the Emersonian tradition". Lowell "had no ideas"; that is to say, he "never achieved a social philosophy". And so on. It was a little hard to fit Poe into this shooting-gallery of writers providing aid and comfort to hard-working pioneers and merchants; and so, after we are told that "nothing is more sinister about Poe than his tacit acceptance of common morals", he is dismissed as "the most menacing indictment" of his society.

The exception for Brooks in our letters is Whitman. His next chapter is one of the important documents in the story of Whitman's ascent to his present fantastic over-evaluation. "Whitman—how else can I express it?—precipitated the American character." Brooks tries other ways of expressing his ecstatic feeling about Whitman, but they are no clearer. At one point he says "In him the hitherto incompatible extremes of the American temperament were fused". This seems to help matters, by reminding us of the "desiccated culture—stark utility" antithesis; until we remember that thirty pages earlier we have been told of Emerson that "he perfectly combined the temperaments of Jonathan Edwards and Benjamin Franklin: —the upper and lower levels of the American mind are fused in him and each becomes the sanction of the other". Which one really furnished the mystic blowtorch? But Whitman, also, it seems, had the same fault as our other writers. In spite of precipitating the American character, fusing our extremes, giving us the sense of something organic in American life, letting in the air of a wider world, pitching his tone to the real spring of action of young men, giving the nation a certain focal center in the consciousness of its own character, making fast the idea and fact of American Totality, laying the cornerstone of a national ideal, providing the raw materials of a racial norm—in spite of all these achievements, he was not a socialist. He provided the raw materials, "but he was too passive to go further. . . . He was too complacent. . . . He never questions the old institutions". It is we, his spiritual descendants, who must finish his work "by merely dropping off most of the old clothes that Whitman found good enough".

The remaining two chapters of *America's Coming-of-Age* add nothing to the foregoing. One is a demolition of Gerald Stanley Lee which could not have been very exciting even when timely. Mr. Lee, it seems, was "intelligent enough to suggest some of the most interesting, stimulating, and indispensable problems of socialism"; but also, it further seems, intelligent enough to reject socialism. This made Brooks very angry. The concluding chapter is a recapitulatory riot of the Brooksian vagueness and the lush, interlocking Brooksian metaphors. This country, in sum, "sends up to heaven the stench of atrophied personality"; but there is hope. "Under the glassy, brassy surface of American jocosity and business there is a pulp and a quick, and this pulpy quick, this nervous and acutely self-critical vitality, is in our day in a strange ferment. A fresh and more sensitive emotion seems to be running up and down even the old Yankee backbone—that unblossoming stalk." Well!

All that is needed is a "social ideal" to work upon "all those energies which are on the point of being released". Brooks modestly admits that "the formulation of a social ideal can only be the work of a wiser head and a riper heart than we have yet seen"; but he can suggest the outlines of it: "It is for the State to weed out the incentives to private gain, it is for us meanwhile simul-

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taneously to build up other incentives to replace them". Beyond this we are not enlightened, except to be told again that "the acquisition of culture and the acquisition of money"—those dread legacies from the Puritans—are not enough. "After all," as the last sentence runs, "humanity is older than Puritanism."

Brooks's later books merely provide footnotes for *America's Coming-of-Age*. In *Letter's and Leadership*, three years after, the same themes are elaborated, the chief differences being an increase in gloom (the first chapter, a description of the state of the country, is one of the most morbidly despondent ever written), and a greater precision in the ingenious formulas which seem to describe America but actually serve to discredit the whole historical structure of society. At his worst Brooks merely lashes out hysterically in such statements as that "our life is, on all its levels, in a state of arrested development", or "poets, painters, philosophers, men of science and religion, are all to be found, stunted, starved, thwarted, embittered, prevented from taking even the first step in self-development".

A deceptive thing about Brooks is the way he sometimes mingles such utterances, which at the most are remotely parallel to the facts, with exact and clear-sighted analyses like this: "As for our literature, it is quite plain that there is nothing inherently 'greater' in many of the writers whose work we import (and rightly import) from abroad than in writers of a corresponding order at home. The former have simply been able to make a better use of their talents owing to the complicated system of critical and traditional forces perpetually at play about them". But instead of following up the obvious logic of his own insight by striving to build here the same "system of critical and traditional forces", Brooks agitates for a set of ideas which have the deliberate aim of tearing down traditions, "sloughing off the old skin of society", in the words of his preface.

The formulas whereby Brooks translated this aim into American terms reach their final shape in *Letters and Leadership*, the shape in which they are still being used by his followers. After preparing the way by his gloomy introduction, he devoted two chapters to his thesis, which I have abridged in his own words by bringing his most significant passages together into a consecutive argument. This results in unfairness to his style and deprives him of his illustrations, but it does not, I think it will be found, distort his meaning.

"Our inherited culture has failed, leaving a sordid and little civilized society. There must have been some inherent weakness in a culture which has lost control of a well-disposed younger generation. What is the secret of its decay?—It was the culture of an age of pioneering. Its function was to prevent the anarchic, dynamic forces of the spirit from interfering with the work of our forebears in subduing a continent. Everything had to be suppressed and denied that would have slackened their manual energy and their ingenuity, by awakening them mentally and spiritually.

"*For the creative impulses of men are always at war with their possessive impulses, and poetry, as we know, springs from brooding on just those aspects of experience that most retard the swift advance of the acquisitive mind.* In our Puritan past the purpose of literature was to provide amusement or a soporific for tired pioneers; our classical writers rendered a great service to this country's primitive development by thus putting all the difficult elements of human nature under an anaesthesia. Puritanism was a complete philosophy for the pioneer and by making human nature contemptible and putting to shame the charms of life it unleashed the acquisitive instincts of men, disembarrassing those instincts by creating the belief that the imagination ought never to conflict with the law of the tribe.

"But in so doing they shelved our spiritual

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life, conventionalizing it in a transcendental upper sphere. When industrialism came, it bowled us over, because for generations our power of resistance had been undermined by Puritanism. Young Americans find themselves born into a race that has drained away all its spiritual resources in the struggle to survive, one that continues to struggle even when the acquisitive life has lost the sanction of necessity which the age of pioneering gave it. But a new age has begun and it is the creative life that the nation calls for now. To live creatively, to live completely—that is the desire of Young America."

Plausible, isn't it? Or at least, ingenious; and it was plausible to the men who were young in 1915, 1920, even in 1925. But few would be taken in by it now; the mood that concealed its speciousness has evaporated, and the young men of today are not so easily gulled by an utterly uncritical use of essential terms and a loose way with history. It would take pages to unravel all the half-truths that are embedded in the Brooksian philosophy. In the light of my analysis of its earlier version in *America's Coming-of-Age*, the main points should be clear. The argument can be stripped down to essentials in almost syllogistic form:

The pioneer life was difficult and practical.

The pioneers were Puritans.

The Puritan-pioneers were perforce intent on "acquisition", neglectful of "creation".

Puritanism and acquisition must go as ideals. Their time passed with the subduing of the continent.

We have already seen what "acquisition" and "Puritanism" mean for Brooks: the first standing for private property and enterprise, the second for the true dualism of the individual; both of which he must attack as a propagandist of the humanitarian pseudo-religion. Thus we see him start from an obvious fact—that the first American settlers were forced to concentrate on practical matters—and proceed, seemingly by logic and fact, to his highly personal conclusion: that the material and spiritual bases of all past history must be superseded.

The catch comes, of course, in his use of the words "acquisition" and "Puritanism". They are the words that enable him to build his bridge between sense and nonsense; they are his "sliding middles". "Acquisition" *seems* to stand for the pioneer concentration on material, practical affairs, and later for our ruthless commercialism; actually it stands for private enterprise and property. "Puritanism" *seems* to stand for unearthly idealism and joylessness, later for our "genteel" culture; actually it stands for the recognition of evil in the individual. "Puritanism" was a word provided by fate for his purposes, since it has so many unpleasant connotations: its hideous theology, the anti-luxury sentiments from its English background, as well as the accidental association with pioneer crudity which he made the most of, as have the other anti-Puritans. (An amusing illustration of what the critics of the Van Wyck Brooks school really mean by Puritanism was remarked in the March BOOKMAN: Edmund Wilson finding in T. S. Eliot's conversion to Anglo-Catholicism "the New Englander's preoccupation with morals and his deep conviction of the sinfulness of man. . . . There is something of the Puritan theologian in Eliot". It is as though Wilson had never heard anything of Christianity except latter-day accounts of its American Puritan form.) Brooks's master-stroke was finding a word which would cover both the practical efforts of the pioneers and modern business, and would at the same time put the latter in an unfavorable light. His word was "acquisitive", varied sometimes with "possessive". His first attempt, as we have seen, was "economic self-assertion", which balanced nicely with "self-fulfillment", but was otherwise less satisfactory.

I have italicized above the sentence in which his key-words "acquisitive" and "possessive" are first put into the central formula

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of Brooks's whole scheme: the opposition between "possession" or "acquisition" and "creation". Notice the "as we know", a typical Brooks rhetorical device to cover a particularly dubious generalization. There is no warrant in fact or in any system of psychology for dividing human impulses or instincts into "acquisitive" and "creative". Certainly a man is not likely to be engaged in making money at the same time that he is writing poetry. But there is no more essential conflict of creative with acquisitive than with combative, domestic, fraternal, studious, exploratory, social, playful, or a dozen other words. Brooks was merely adopting the familiar trick of the man with a thesis who lacks insight: rigidly dividing human traits into two groups, one with a vague but pleasant name, one with an equally vague but unpleasant name, and then labelling everything he likes with the first and everything he dislikes with the other. For such psychology-while-you-wait to achieve an influence in criticism is a sad reflection on our critical standards.

But there is another part of the Brooksian scheme the acceptance of which seems to me still more fantastic. I mean his condemnation of all the best of American literature. Since his explanation of the low state of our literature today is that it is being crippled by the business and religious habits surviving from Puritan-pioneer times, it is impossible for him to admit that even closer to those times we had a great burst of high creation. He is forced to make it seem as trivial as possible. Much of his critical energy has gone into satirizing our leading writers, or in dismissing them wholesale as in the phrases quoted above. He is here under the same compulsion as other humanitarian crusaders, like Tolstoy condemning Shakespeare and his own novels because they did not fit into the humanitarian gospel with which he was hagridden. It is a difficult and unsolved problem to account for the decline in American letters from the age of Emerson and Hawthorne to the age of Dewey and Dreiser, but to resort to a formula that makes it necessary to dismiss the writers of the earlier age as merely soothers of weary pioneers and merchants is to prove one's intellectual bankruptcy.

But this survey of the anti-humanist myth has been too long interrupted by the unpleasant and futile business of dissecting that corpse, the body of ideas of Van Wyck Brooks. It remains only to show how he contributed directly to the myth under survey. I should say that, on the whole, his contribution was the most effective of all, just as his mood, his ideas, his phrases, have been dominant in the most influential criticism of the last few years. Being a destroyer rather than a creator, in spite of his obsession with the word creation, almost if not quite his main purpose had to be that of wiping the slate clean of the critical leaders who preceded him. The central chapters of *Letters and Leadership* are devoted to that end. The old faith of America, he says, has gone. It was betrayed by what was false within. It was unable to embrace the freer impulses of a new time. America's task is to build a new faith. "Our critics and philosophers have thus far shirked this task. . . . Our leaders are themselves lost."

Brooks's method of demonstrating this might be pretty well predicted from what I have already written. At least, his attack on the defenders of tradition might be foreseen, but they are only one of the two groups he feels it necessary to demolish. The other is that of the pragmatists. And here, manifestly, his ordinary formulas will not work, since the pragmatists for the most part accept the same anti-traditional bases as Brooks himself. To kill them he has to use different tactics; and his tactics are so quaint that I cannot forbear holding up the history for another few paragraphs to display them. The Brooks I have thus far been analyzing, the Brooks with the humanitarian gospel, is really Brooks at *(Continued on page 353)*

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THOMAS MANN AND ANDRÉ GIDE

by Kenneth Burke

When Gustav von Aschenbach, the hero of Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice*, was about thirty-five years of age, he was taken ill in Vienna. During the course of a conversation, one keen observer said of him: "You see, Aschenbach has always lived like this", and the speaker contracted the fingers of his left hand into a fist; "never like this", and he let his hand droop comfortably from the arm of a chair. It is with such opening and closing of the hand that this essay is to deal.

In the early writings of both Mann and Gide the characters are exceptional, though always in keeping with our metaphor. Mann's concern is with serious and lonely fellows, deviations from type, who are overburdened with a feeling of divergency from their neighbors. In stories like *Der Bajazzo* the deformations are more mental, but generally the subject is simplified by his imagining characters who are physically extravagant. There is Tobias Mindernickel, whose ill-dressed, gaunt, ungainly figure excites the persecution of all healthy children. He buys a little puppy, and names it Esau. They become inseparable, but one day as Esau leaps for food, it is accidentally wounded by a knife which Tobias is holding, whereupon Tobias nurses his puppy with great tenderness. After some days it is cured, it no longer lies gazing at him with bewildered, suffering eyes, it leaps down from its sick-bed, goes racing about with full delight in its puppyhood, with no thought that it is showing how it no longer needs Tobias's morbid tenderness. It is a cheerful little mutt—and maddened at his loss, Tobias plunges his knife into it again, then forlornly gathers its dying body in his arms. Similarly, there is the little Herr Friedemann, who, humble as he is, can by the course of his story be still further humiliated and, in the very act of taking his life, grovels. Mann also writes of an abnormally fat man, who worships his adulterous wife abjectly, and falls dead of apoplexy at a particularly comical moment, topples like a collapsing building, when he feels the full weight of the indignities which have been heaped upon him. And Piepsam, Herr Gottlob Piepsam, a decayed alcoholic, a victim of life if there ever was one, is insulted as he goes to visit the grave of his wife. On the path to the cemetery he is passed by a boy on a bicycle, the merest child who is too happy to be anything but well-meaning, yet Piepsam resents him and works himself into a fatal rage—the story being told fancifully, even cheerfully. After Piepsam has been bundled off in an ambulance, one feels how brightly the sun is shining.

These outsiders (Mann later took over the word "outsider" from the English) appear under many guises. They watch, they compare themselves with others to their own detriment, they are earnest to the point of self-disgust, and they are weighted with vague responsibilities. In *Tonio Kröger* the

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concept has matured. Tonio's divergencies are subtler. As a writer, he observes the unliterary with nostalgia. Vacillating by temperament, one might almost say vacillating by profession, he seeks simple people, who form for him a kind of retrogressive ideal. He does not fraternize with them, he spies upon them. A Bohemian, he distrusts Bohemianism. He watches these others, awed by the healthiness, or the ease, of their satisfactions. It is a kind of inverted praising, since he envies them for qualities which he himself has outgrown. And it is melancholy.

Against this earnestness, this non-conforming mind's constant preoccupation with conformity, we find in the early writings of Gide much the same rotten elegance as characterizes Wilde's *The Portrait of Dorian Gray*. Religious thinking is perverted to produce an atmosphere of decay and sinfulness. There is the Baudelairean tendency to invoke Satan as redeemer. Even in a work as late as *Les Nourritures terrestres*, we find a crooked evangelism, calling us to vague and unnatural revelations. These artificial prophecies, with a rhetorical, homiletic accent which Gide has since abandoned, suggest a kind of morbid Whitmanism. In place of expansion across an unpeopled continent, we have a pilgrimage through old, decaying cities, erotic excitations at the thought of anonymity and freedom among the ruins of other cultures. The hero who cries out to Nathaniel is seeking, not the vigor of health, but the intensity of corruption. The mood, if I understand it correctly, has by now lost much of its immediacy, but in his later works Gide has shown it capable of great readaptation; what we find earlier, in an archaistic terminology, is subsequently transformed into something wholly contemporary.

The most thorough contrast between these writers probably arises from the juxtaposition of Mann's *Death in Venice* and Gide's *The Immoralist*. Gustav von Aschenbach is nationally respected as a master of his calling. Parts of his works are even among the prescribed reading of school children. His austerity, his "morality of production", is emphasized. Aschenbach has clearly erected a structure of external dignity in keeping with the sobriety, the earnestness, which he has brought to the business of writing. But he is now undergoing a period of enervation. He finds that he cannot tackle his page with the necessary zest. As a purely therapeutic measure, he permits himself a trip to Venice, and here becomes fascinated by a young Polish boy, Tadzio, who is living in the same hotel. In his shy and troubled contemplation of this boy he finds an absorption which is painful, but imperious. Von Aschenbach remains outwardly the man of dignity honored by his nation—he does not, as I recall, ever exchange a word with this Tadzio, whose freshness, liquidity, immaturity are the sinister counterpart to the desiccation of Aschenbach's declining years. But inwardly he is *notwendig liederlich und Abenteurer des Gefühls*. Necessarily dissolute—an adventurer of the emotions—the words are Mann's, when discussing this book in his *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* years afterwards. We thus find again the notion that the artist faces *by profession* alternatives which are contrary to society. The theme of Aschenbach's gloomy infatuation coexists with the theme of the plague—and we observe the elderly man's erotic fevers metamorphose gradually into the fevers of incipient cholera. A poignant and inventive passage describing his cosmetic treatment at the hands of a barber is followed by Aschenbach's delirious remembrance of lines from the *Phædrus*, wherein Socrates is speaking words of courtship and metaphysics indiscriminately, a merging which Aschenbach makes more pronounced by his own diseased reworking of the Platonic dialogue. A few pages later "a respectably shocked world" receives the news of his death.

The same themes, sickness and sexual vagary, underlie Gide's *The Immoralist*. Michel, after being at the verge of death and being nursed by his bride into vigorous health,

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subtly drives her to her own grave. Throughout the novel he is profuse in his tenderness, he is almost hysterically attentive to her, but at the same time he is steadily destroying her—and during the final march of her illness he takes her on that savage pilgrimage from city to city which inevitably results in her death. There has been a young Arab on the fringes of this plot, an insolent fellow who first charmed Michel by stealing from his wife. The reader places him unmistakably as a motive in this unpunishable murder. Despite the parallelism between *Death in Venice* and *The Immoralist*, the emphasis is very different. Whereas in Mann we feel most the sense of resistance, of resignation to the point of distress, and Aschenbach's dissolution is matched by a constant straining after self-discipline, in Gide we hear a narrator who relates with more than pride, with something akin to positive advocacy, the unclean details of his life. *"Je vais vous parler longuement de mon corps"*, he opens one chapter in a tone which I sometimes regret he has seen fit to drop from his later work; there is no mistaking its connotations; it is the accent of evangelism, of pleading.

Buddenbrooks and *Lafcadio's Adventure* do not fall in corresponding stages of their authors' developments. *Buddenbrooks*, a remarkably comprehensive realistic novel of life in North Germany, comes much earlier. But the same contrast in attitude is apparent. We might interpret *Buddenbrooks* as having the theme of *Tonio Kröger* greatly subtilized and ramified. This "fall of a family" through four generations is also the "growth of an artist" through four generations. What is lost in health and moral certitude is gained in questioning and conscientiousness, in social and esthetic sensitiveness, until we arrive at little Hanno the musician, who, like Aschenbach, finally mingles inspiration with disease, as we watch his improvisations become the first symptoms of the typhoid fever that is to result in his death. In *Lafcadio's Adventure*, however, we meet with a brilliant type of villainy, an "esthetic criminal" who commits crimes for pure love of the art. The character of Lafcadio is perhaps Gide's most remarkable discovery. It suggests a merging of Stendhal's Julien Sorel with those criminals of Dostoievski whose transgressions are inexplicable from the standpoint of utilitarian purpose.

In *Lafcadio's Adventure* Gide makes a notable change in nomenclature, recasting his "corruption" in more characteristically contemporary moulds of thought. The transgressions have become "secular", advancing from sin to crime. If theology remains, it is relegated to a more superficial function; it becomes background, the story being built about a swindle whereby certain picturesque crooks fleece Catholic pietists. Lafcadio, who remembers five uncles but no father, has placed villainy on a distinguished and difficult plane. The author endows him with accomplishments somewhat lavishly, perhaps even a bit credulously; he seems eager that our sympathies be with this experimenter in crime, who can look upon kindly and vicious acts as almost interchangeable:

> The old woman with the little white cloud above her head, who pointed to it and said: "It won't rain to-day!" that poor shrivelled old woman whose sack I carried on my shoulders (he had followed his fancy of travelling on foot for four days across the Apennines, between Bologna and Florence, and had slept a night at Covigliajo) and whom I kissed when we got to the top of the hill . . . one of what the *curé* of Covigliajo would have called my "good actions". I could just as easily have throttled her—my hand would have been as steady—when I felt her dirty wrinkled skin beneath my fingers. . . . Ah! how caressingly she stroked and dusted my coat collar and said *"figlio mio! carino!"*. . . I wonder what made my joy so intense when afterwards—I was still in a sweat—I lay down on the moss—not smoking though—in the shade of that big chestnut-tree. I felt as though I could have clasped the whole of mankind to my heart in my single embrace—or strangled it, for that matter.

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We shall not reconstruct here that gratuitous murder which recommends the hero particularly to our attention when poor Fleurissoire, attracted by this pleasant-seeming lad, chooses to seat himself in the same compartment with him and unknowingly excites Lafcadio to homicidal criticism. Gide exacts a very complex reception on the part of his reader. He asks us to observe a moral outrage committed by a charming scoundrel to whose well-being we are considerably pledged. Fleurissoire is the butt of much injustice in this book, but it is Lafcadio, insolent, despotic, with his mercurial slogan "what would happen if . . ." who earns our suffrage.

The war ends, the mythical post-war period begins, and Thomas Mann issues *The Magic Mountain*, Gide *The Counterfeiters*. Our contrast is by no means imperiled. Mann shows how for seven years, during his illness in the mountains, Hans Castorp has lain exposed to moral questionings. While each day observing his temperature and eating five enormous meals to combat the wastage of his phthisis, he is privileged to hear the grave problems of our culture aired by sparring critics, themselves diseased, who speak with much rhetorical and dialectic finish. In particular, a humanist and a Jesuit altercate for his benefit, until Mynherr Peeperkorn enters (a much grander version of Herr Klöterjahn in the story *Tristan*) and routs them both by his inarticulate vitality. He is life, himself ailing, to be sure, but magnificent and overwhelming while he lasts—and Castorp's melancholy respect for him is, in a matured and complex form, Tonio Kröger's respect for the burghers whom he watched with aloof humility. Castorp has the attitude of a student. Under ordinary circumstances he would probably have been unthinking, but he is made sensitive by his illness and his seven years' elevation above the century. He amasses greater understanding chapter by chapter, or at least learns to play one statement against another—until once more we come to that bewildered fever which marks the close of both *Buddenbrooks* and *Death in Venice*. At the last, as we see him on the battlefield, advancing to the aimless business of slaughter, simplified, regimented, unquestioning, we comprehend his evasion. For years he has been uncertain—he now embraces the arbitrary certainty of war. "Moralism, pessimism, humor"—these three qualities, whose interrelation Mann himself has stressed, are the dominant traits of this momentous novel, a summarizing book, a comprehensive and symbolic work to be included in the world's literature of last wills and testaments.

To turn from *The Magic Mountain* to *The Counterfeiters* is to turn from brooding to shrewdness. Cruelty, malice, sensuality, intrigue—such elements are assiduously welded into an entertaining volume, of much subtle literary satisfaction. The reader of *The Magic Mountain* may have to deal with the fruits of complexity on the part of the author, but he receives them simply. The reader of *The Counterfeiters* finds complexity unresolved—he is not even at liberty to differentiate between the absurd and the beautiful. He is left fluctuant, in great tenuousness of moral values. The book continues Gide's development from sin to crime, and reaffirms his sympathy with deviations from the average ethical stock.

Returning to Aschenbach, ill at the age of thirty-five in Vienna, we find ourselves with correspondences for the closed and opened hand. It seems that Mann, who himself has situated the mainspring of his work in conscientiousness, is like his protagonist Aschenbach, with the hand contracted. And Gide, whose works could readily be taken by the immature or the trivial as invitations to the most unscrupulous kinds of living, who masters an air of suave corruption beyond any possible corrupt act, Gide can be the hand relaxed. *Gewissenhaftigkeit, Einsamkeit*—loneliness, the sense of responsibility—are Mann's words; but as the most distinctive

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devise for Gide, I would quote from his Journal the triptych: *"nouveauté, vice, art"*.

Our primary purpose, however, in establishing this distinction between the conscientious and the corrupt is to destroy it. One need not read far in the writings of Gide to discover the strong ethical trait which dominates his thinking. Perhaps no other modern writer has quoted the New Testament so frequently, or shown such readiness to settle secular issues by formulas drawn from religion. His critical work on Dostoievski, with its theological distinction between the psychology of humility and the psychology of humiliation, is throughout an exercise in moral sensitiveness. And his Lafcadio is a mass of categorical imperatives. We learn from entries in his diary how, with the athleticism of an anchorite, he plunges a knife into his side for penance, one thrust "for having beaten Protos at chess", another thrust "for having answered before Protos", four thrusts "for having cried at hearing of Faby's death". Faby was one of his "uncles". Protos was his master in adventure, his accomplished rival, and Lafcadio punished himself, it seems, for not having been disdainful enough to let Protos win. Lafcadio's lamentable conduct might even be derived from an excess of scruples, though these scruples are peculiar to himself.

"I began to feel", Gide has written on this subject in his autobiography, *Si le Grain ne meurt*, "that perhaps all men's obligations were not the same, and that God himself might well abhor the uniformity against which nature protests but towards which the Christian ideal seems to lead us in aiming to bring nature under control. I could concede none but an individual morality, its imperatives sometimes in conflict with those of other moralities. I was persuaded that each person, or at least each one of the elect, had to play a rôle on earth, which was wholly his own and did not resemble any other. And every attempt to submit to a general rule became treason in my eyes, yes, treason which I likened to that great unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost, since the individual lost his precise, irreplaceable significance, his 'savor'."

We should also consider Gide's *Strait is the Gate*, which constructs a sympathetic idyll out of the perverse rigors of chastity. As Alissa is courted by Jerome, the two progress into a difficult relationship, obscuring their sensual attraction beneath complex forms of tenderness, and living in a state of pietistic exaltation. Jerome seeks her patiently and unerringly—and with the vocabulary of nobility she beckons to him while continually delaying the time of their union. At first she can offer logical pretexts for this delay, but as they are one by one removed she retreats behind the subterfuges of her faith, and with the assistance of Biblical quotations, morbidly chosen, she remains to the end difficult, pure, intact, a treasure, while loving Jerome with hysterical effusiveness. From the standpoint of its genesis the book is doubtless a companion piece to *The Immoralist*. Both are perverse studies in the frustration of heterosexual union, the one with the connotations of corruption, the other with connotations of great conscientiousness. When bringing the two together, we see that Alissa's moral sensitiveness was no greater than that of Michel. Similarly we should recall in *The Counterfeiters* the brutal letter which the bastard Bernard Profitendieu writes to his nominal father, a dutifully vicious letter, and the first step, we might say, in the growth of Bernard's affection.

Has not Mann, on the other hand, spoken with fervor of a "sympathy with the abyss", an admitting of the morally chaotic, which he considers not merely the prerogative, but the duty, of the artist? Aschenbach is committed to conflict: whatever policy he decides upon for his conduct, he must continue to entertain disintegrating factors in contemplation. That practical "virtuous" procedure which silences the contrary is not allowed

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him. He must contain dissolution. In "the repellent, the diseased, the degenerate" Mann situates the ethical. Distinguishing between the moral and the virtuous, he finds that the moralist is "exposed to danger" and "resists no evil". As essential components of art he names "the forbidden, the adventurous, scrutiny, and self-abandonment". Defining sin as doubt, he pleads for sinfulness. His work might be called an epistemology of dignity, for he never relinquishes the love of dignity, and never ceases to make the possession of it difficult.

Mann has defined the problematical as the proper sphere of art ("art is the problematical sphere of the human"). In any event, the problematical is the sphere of his own art. Implicit in his work there is a cult of conflict, a deliberate entertaining of moral vacillation, which could not permit a rigid standard of judgments. He has said that the artist must contain his critic, must recognize the validity of contraries. This attitude would make such simple certainty as moral indignation impossible. It would imply exposure to mutually exclusive codes of conduct, diverse modes of behavior. Esthetically, as he himself has said, he finds the unification of this attitude in irony, which merges the sympathetic and antipathetic aspects of any subject. Unlike the satirist, the standpoint of the ironist is shifting—he cannot maintain a steady attack—by the standards of military morale he is treacherous; he belittles the things he lives for, and with melancholy praises what he abandons. He is equally tentative towards *Leben*, life, nature, and *Geist*, spirit, the intellectual order erected above life. The vigor of the pamphleteer is denied him. To the Rooseveltian mind he is corrosive—wherefore that "sympathy with the abyss" which anyone of rigid criteria, of sure distinctions between the admirable and the reprehensible, must feel as corrupting, and which Mann himself, approaching from the attitude of alien criticism, chose to designate as "dissolute". The ironist is essentially *impure*, even in the chemical sense of purity, since he is divided. He must deprecate his own enthusiasms, and distrust his own resentments. He will unite waveringly, as the components of his attitude, "dignity, repugnance, the problematical, and art".

To the slogan-minded, the ralliers about a flag, the marchers who convert a simple idea into a simple action, he is an "outsider". Yet he must observe them with nostalgia, he must feel a kind of awe for their fertile assurance, even while remaining on the alert to stifle it with irony each time he discovers it growing in unsuspected quarters within himself. It will continue to rise anew, for man has a tremendous fund of certainty—and one will find only too little of Mann's best ironic manner in his essays written during the war, or will find it without its counterpart of melancholy. Yet I grant that the slogans of his opponents were enough to infuriate any subtle man in his position; the temporary disorientation which turned him away from the ironist and towards the pamphleteer is readily understandable. In *The Magic Mountain*, however, the author has recovered from his citizenship to become again the artist. Castorp descends, not to a specific European war, but to regimentation, to the relief, even the suicidal relief, of the slogan-minded. He, the hero, represents the ultimate betrayal of his author's own most serious message. After years of vacillation he seeks the evasion of a monastery, though in these secular days, when the power of theology has dwindled, the dogmatic certainties for which people are burned will more often be those of patriotism, and the equivalent of churchly penance becomes the advance in numbers under arms.

What Mann does with irony, Gide parallels with experimentalism, with curiosity. He views any set code of values with distrust, because it implies the exclusion of other codes. He speculates as to "what would happen if . . .". He is on guard lest the possible be obscured by the real. In his autobiography

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we find him, characteristically, considering a whole civilization gratuitously different from our own:

> I thought of writing the imaginary history of a people, a nation, with wars, revolutions, changes of administration, typical happenings. . . . I wanted to invent heroes, sovereigns, statesmen, artists, an artistic tradition, an apocryphal literature, explaining and criticizing movements, recounting the evolution of forms, quoting fragments of masterpieces. . . . And all to what purpose? To prove that the history of man could have been different—our habits, morals, customs, tastes, judgments, standards of beauty could have all been different—and yet the humanity of mankind would remain the same.

By recalling *Gulliver's Travels*, we see again how far removed we are from satire. Perhaps, in a much simpler and more lyrical form, Gide did write this book. I refer to *La Symphonie pastorale,* where he speculates upon a world foreign to him, an arbitrary world so far as this author is concerned, the world of blindness. He even contrives to forget his own knowledge, as when his blind heroine, trying to meditate her way into the world of sight, surmises that sunlight must be like the humming of a kettle.

Perhaps one may interpret Gide's "corruption" too literally. I do not believe that his work can be evaluated properly unless we go beyond the subject-matter to the underlying principles. His choice of material even implies a certain obscurantism, assuming a sophistication on the part of the reader whereby the reader would not attempt too slavishly to become the acting disciple of his author's speculations. Surely Gide would be the first to admit that we could not build a very convenient society out of Lafcadios, however admirable they are. I should take the specific events in Gide as hardly more than symbols: their parallel in life would not be the enacting of similar events, but the exercising of the complex state of mind which arises from the contemplation of such events with sympathy. To live a life like the life in Gide's books would be to commit under another form the very kind of exclusion which he abhors—Lafcadio is for the pious, he is not for poisoners and forgers. Nor must one, in placing this author's malice, forget his *Travels in the Congo*, with its protests against the systematic injustice meted out to the Negroes at the hands of the concessionaires.*

Irony, novelty, experimentalism, vacillation, the cult of conflict—are not these men trying to make us at home in indecision, are they not trying to humanize the state of doubt? A philosopher has recently written of this new wilderness we now face, a wilderness not of nature, but of social forces. Perhaps there is an evasion, a shirking of responsibility, in becoming certain too quickly, particularly when our certainties involve reversions to an ideology which has the deceptive allurement of tradition. To seek the backing of the past may be as cowardly as to seek the backing of the many, and as flattering to our more trivial needs of conformity. Need people be in haste to rebel against the state of doubt, when doubt has not yet permeated the organs of our body, the processes of our metabolism, the desire for food and companionship, the gratification with sun and water? There is a large reserve of physical unquestioning, and until we find this reserve itself endangered by the humiliation of tentative living and unauthoritative thinking, are we compelled to reach out impetuously for set criteria? Since the body is dogmatic, a generator of belief, society might well be benefited by the corrective of a dis-

* It is doubtful, I grant, whether Gide arrived at his useful position through wholly untrammeled motives. The Olympian result shows traces of troubled, Orphic beginnings. It seems likely that his concern with homosexuality, and his struggle for its "recognition", early gave him a sense of divergence from the social norms among which he lived, and in time this sense of divergence was trained upon other issues. In seeking, let us say, to defend a practice which society generally considered reprehensible, he came to defend practices which society considered more reprehensible—as a child who resented a cruel father might end by slaying the king.

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integrating art, which converts each simplicity into a complexity, which ruins the possibility of ready hierarchies, which concerns itself with the problematical, the experimental, and thus by implication works corrosively upon those expansionistic certainties preparing the way for our social cataclysms. An art may be of value purely through preventing a society from becoming too assertively, too hopelessly, itself.

Could action be destroyed by such an art, this art would be disastrous. But art can at best serve to make action more labored. To be sure, so long as we feel the need of certitude, the state of doubt is discomforting, and by its very prolongation can make for our hysterical retreat into belief, as Hans Castorp descended from his mountain to the battlefield. But why could one not come to accept his social wilderness without anguish, utilizing for his self-respect either the irony and melancholy of Mann, or the curiosity of Gide? In the unformed there are opportunities which can be invigorating to contemplate. One need not suffer under insecurity any more than an animal suffers from being constantly on the alert for danger. This state of technical apprehension can be a norm, and certainly an athletic norm.

No, our fellows want the seasoned stocks and bonds of set beliefs, and they hope to enrich themselves in these securities as rapidly as possible. Meanwhile, there is an art, a questioning art, still cluttered with the merest conveniences of thinking, a highly fluctuant thing often turning against itself and its own best discoveries. How far it will go, how well it can maintain its character, I should not venture to calculate. But working in the traditions of such art are the two conscientious, or corrupt, writers, Thomas Mann and André Gide. When art is asked to set itself up as "*præceptor patriæ*, haranguing youth in the classical style of virtue, without shame", they remain men who, with considerable literary endowments, maintain "the Bohemian, the ironic and melancholy, the unattached, the grimly humorous, the innocent, the childish". They do so, it is true, under a deceptive guise. They are not Villons, or Baudelaires. Nor will they relinquish the Villon, the Baudelaire.

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A POEM TO COMMEMORATE THE BIRTHDAY OF CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

by Charles Norman

Elizabethan Muse whom I
Invoke with many a halting sigh,
Teach me to sing of him whose song
And memory I must not wrong
By numbers moving with slight pace,
Barren of that majestic grace
Of old investing his great verse,
Brilliant, melodious and terse,
As if the whole of it were clad
In ermine, and as if he had
Meant it to be read by kings
Whose fingers were all crowned with rings.

Marlowe, whom we delight to praise,
Died, being mortal, shorn of bays;
But not even the hearse of time
That bears away all things, and rhyme,
As wind the summer, can mar the book
Wherein Shakespeare his schooling took,
Shakespeare, who was the flowering
Of Marlowe's blighted middle spring.
(Sere reaper, Autumn, who shakes the trees,
And brings proud Summer to her knees,
A mortal once did mimic thee
To slay the flower of poesy.)

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As many years as a year has days
Have spent themselves in bright arrays
Of shining summer hours, or sere
Wherein the winter of each year
Troubled the world with windy time
And clad the leafless trees in rime,
Since he was born, whose wont it was
To walk abroad and tread the grass
In Canterbury as a child
Whom the Cathedral walls beguiled;
Who saw the window-roses bloom,
God's very flowers in the gloom.

Of nights, when winds harried the sedge,
And troubled him by the wood's edge,
What thoughts he had we may surmise,
And guess the ardor in his eyes,
The longing in him to be up
At dawn, to take the road and sup
In London, London that he heard
Mentioned with every other word
The Canterbury idlers said
Standing by taverns. Overhead
The pictured sign-boards swung on high,
And creaked their legends to the sky.

The Canterbury men were brave,
They ventured forth to find a grave;
The Canterbury wives were neat,
They poured the wine and broiled the meat;
The Canterbury lads were merry,
Their cheeks the color of wild berry;
And Canterbury girls were fair,
With ribbons flying in their hair;
But hearing what old soldiers told him,
Canterbury could not hold him,
And in books after school, at night,
He read of London and delight.

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What though his sire cobbled shoes?
He would make slippers for his Muse;
And other lads might seek to be
Tall soldiers of Her Majesty,
Empress and Queen, by grace divine,
And scion of a royal line;
But in his brain there moved the horde
Of Tamburlaine, with spear and sword,
On horse, on foot, and all the gear
Of battle; catapults the rear
Brought up, and after these there came
Hours of brooding clad in flame.

So the days passed, and the lad grew
In stature, and in purpose, too;
Heard and perceived, but little spoke,
Unwilling that the village folk
By any word, provoked by ruse,
Should learn his mistress was his muse.
Still stood the City shod in gleams,
London the city of his dreams;
But King's School kept him prisoner
Who sought to be a wanderer;
And the hedges of loneliness
Hemmed him in with his distress.

Next Cambridge, and a student's life;
Others caroused: he took to wife
The muse of Ovid, lusty, lewd,
But not obscene and never rude.
And like an alchemist he sought
To transmute Ovid, till he wrought
Ovid's serene Latinity
Into sweet English poesy,
(Albeit not with the pure gold
Of his late pen) naïve, and bold,
Melodious and sensuous,
And eke (at times) erroneous.

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The legends of antiquity
Fired his brain; the tragedy
Of Dido, hapless, love-bereft,
Whom fate-bidden Æneas left
(As Virgil tells), was impetus
For his first drama: amorous,
And couched in such felicity,
The Cambridge dons marvelled to see.
The University wit became
The campus' ornament, and Fame
First saw the name which oft she wrote,
On which she still delights to dote.

Next, the shadowy years and dim;
The Privy Council sent for him;
Through it he served Her Majesty.
And saw, in service oversea,
The lands of France and the Netherlands,
And walled cities by their commands,
Knights and archers on battlements,
And felt the pulse of dire events.
These things reported; and so came
Back to the cradle of his fame,
Subtle in matters of the State;
From thence to London and to fate.

Master Christopher Marlowe now;
No lyric garlands bound his brow;
But when he came to London Town,
The unseen garland was a crown
That marshalled forth to his acclaim
The mincing hirelings of fame.
His verse was soon in every stall,
Actors of the Lord Admiral
Jingled the Jew of Malta's gold,
Or mouthed the turbulent and bold
Momentous words of Tamburlaine
Whose armies overran the plain.

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Great was his fame, and great his pride;
To see him by the fireside
In Mermaid Tavern, hallowed shrine,
Men deemed his visage was divine.
He was the friend of all the great,
Therefore the object of some hate,
Reviled by Puritans, and those
Vile hacks who envied him fame's rose.
Marlowe was all the talk they heard.
And his fame, like the phoenix-bird,
Soared from the faggots of hate's pyre
To the serene song of his lyre.

Into this aura of his fame,
The muses' darling, Shakespeare, came,
To be his friend who was his peer,
Poet whose bays Time cannot sere;
And what these two together writ,
The world must marvel, reading it.
And since these two together walked
In London streets, and breathed, and talked
In Mermaid Tavern over wine,
Smaller men have been called divine,
And taken the laurels these two wore
Like to a King and Emperor.

In a vile world, in a vile age,
I give the tribute of this page;
His glittering monument is sure
While England and my land endure;
For whoso speaks our common tongue
Must mourn his passing who died young
Yet left behind him such a name,
And all who read him swell his fame.
This be the tribute from my pen:
He should have praise from greater men,
Slain poet whom I cherish most,
O affable, familiar ghost!

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THE PRESENTMENT OF THE JEW IN AMERICAN FICTION

by Florence Kiper Frank

Until about the beginning of the much appraised last decade, the American Jew in American fiction tended to be as conventionalized a figure as the fictional presentment of the American Negro. His fictional formula was for the most part simple. He was a figure of humor or of pathos, or of humor softened by the easy tear. He was the Mr. Gonorowsky of the tenements or the Mr. Perlmutter of the business world. He was funny because of his brashness, tragic because of his bewilderment. His speech was dialect, his economic condition was that of poverty or of a parvenu affluence.

During the nineteen-twenties, the Jew has received a more adequate portrayal. He is no longer the standardized figure of the magazine stories of the early years of the century, but in the presentment of at least a few able fictionists he has become an authentic creation. In the last few years there has been too a rise in the economic and cultural status of the fictional American Jew. The Jew of leisure and of cultivation is an emergent figure in American fiction, and, with Paul Rosenfeld and Ludwig Lewisohn, that brilliant and neurotic figure, the Jewish intellectual.

It is true enough that the Jew in America, except in his more obvious and picturesque aspects, is a difficult protagonist for the novelist. In his process of assimilation—an assimilation which never quite comes off—he is a puzzle to himself and to his Gentile environment. He is a close influence in the business, the politics, the art of the country, and yet he is differentiated. His social life is a circle within the larger circle of the American *mores*. He is undoubtedly an irritation and a mystery to a Protestant civilization whose religious emotions are inextricably entangled in the Hebraic tradition. Provocative material, all this, for the fictionist, but tricky.

Until the appearance of Ludwig Lewisohn's recent novels and autobiographies, the articulate Jewish intellectual has been singularly inarticulate on the subject of himself. Either he has completely identified himself with the American experience, or he has been in the process of trying to believe in this identification because of what Mr. Lewisohn calls his neurosis of escape. For whatever reasons, such writers as might have revealed the Jew have preferred, with some profit to themselves, to exploit the American folkways, as Miss Edna Ferber has done in *Show Boat* and *Cimarron*, or to treat their Jews with the amused or the satiric detachment of the Gentile writer. Mr. Lewisohn is indeed the first author of our fiction who has used his material without a certain trace of reluctance. He has whole-heartedly identified himself with his group and has therefore been able to write of them *con amore*.

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Mr. Lewisohn too is the one novelist who has employed his contemporary material in relation to the whole of racial tradition. By his projection of the American Jew against the historic background he has been able to give a significant interpretation of his modern group, an interpretation not attempted in any of the competent and accurate novels that had preceded him. It is a treatment for which perhaps no other contemporary American novelist has the equipment.

Whatever the defects of *The Island Within* —its occasional confusion of polemics with fiction, its failure to encompass the intended large unification of its themes—Mr. Lewisohn has accomplished one part of his difficult task with high success. In the character of Dr. Arthur Levy he has portrayed with completeness the American Jewish intellectual. The mental withdrawals and aggressions, the emotional uncertainties, the attempted orientation in an environment of shifting tolerances will never be done so well again. Dr. Levy is not only an interesting portrayal in himself, but he is important as a prototype of innumerable other young Jews of the modern decade.

In his depiction of a contemporary social background Mr. Lewisohn does not come off quite so happily. The social environment of Arthur Levy's adolescence is not, as Mr. Lewisohn believes it, the environment of this decade but the environment of Mr. Lewisohn's own youth, a Jewish background untouched by the sophistication and pseudo-hardness of the post-war period. His picture of obedient Jewish children, of unfeminist Jewish wives, is a pretty fantasy not uncolored by Teutonic sentimentality, but wanting in the veracity of observation that gives edge to his trenchant portraiture of the half-Gentile, half-Jewish literary crowd. Mr. Lewisohn's assumption that there are no Elizabeth Knights in the modern generation of American Jewish women is, to one who has lived among them, somewhat naïve. It is true that the Jewish woman, in her feminist adaptations, is apt to play safer than her Gentile sister and is warier of domestic smash, but this caution cannot be counted for her entirely on the score of altruistic devotion.

It is of course in his study of intermarriage that Mr. Lewisohn finds the neatest exposition of his thesis of ineradicable racial differences. But in spite of himself his story of the marriage of Arthur and Elizabeth becomes what is properly the material of another novel—an interesting study of a modern "advanced" marriage and of its disintegration, to which the racial theme is irrelevant. These two young people come to grief because of temperamental antagonisms, but their temperamental antagonisms are not primarily those of race. It will take a novelist more hard-headed and objective, less preoccupied with his personal difficulties than Mr. Lewisohn, to give a veristic intermarriage situation—an American study which still waits to be done by a shrewd social satirist.

In *Stephen Escott* Mr. Lewisohn is unfortunately defeated by his theory that the modern novelist is obligated to be a moral propagandist. It seems to be high time that Mr. Lewisohn effect a cleavage in himself between the writer of treatises and the fictionist, if he is to save himself as an artist. In this latest work he sets out to be a clinician of American marriage, and succeeds only in proving himself less able as a sociologist and psychiatrist than as a writer of stories. In the attempt to digest simultaneously a belief in individual freedom and a passionate conviction that the modern woman is all too modern, he becomes sadly muddle-headed. One is left with the impression that Mr. Lewisohn thinks that there cannot be too much individual freedom in modern marriage, provided this freedom be exclusively a male prerogative.

In his story of four marriages, Mr. Lewisohn reasons deductively that the Christian ethos, because of its ascetic tendencies, conduces both to hypocrisy and to emotional sterility in sexual relationships, whereas the

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Jewish way of life, anti-sensual but realistic, furnishes the satisfactory solution of the whole vexed problem. Sustained by his thesis, he compels his three Gentile couples, come to various stages of grief, to contemplate the spectacle of the happy and spiritually fruitful Jewish mating, with whatever profit may accrue to them from the sight. What Mr. Lewisohn fails to perceive is that human beings of the modern world can no longer be separated into these simple categories, that they are inevitably played on by other forces than the Paulinian theology or the Talmudic injunctions. Let him consult the case-histories of his own Dr. Levy, if he thinks that sexual maladjustments are a Nordic monopoly. He will find in the documents of the psychiatrists sufficient evidence to disprove the wishful belief that, in this complex industrial age, Jewish marriage is conforming or can conform to its traditional pattern.

Paul Rosenfeld, in *The Boy in the Sun* also portrays the Jewish intellectual in a New York environment. Mr. Rosenfeld has followed the typical procedure of the modern autobiographical novel in its minute delineation of the emotional processes of childhood and youth. His "boy" is a sensitive and intelligent child of the German-Jewish cultivated middle class. Although Mr. Rosenfeld's chief concern is the subjective life of his hero —a youth struggling to escape the subtle social enclosures of Jewishness—he manages to project a shadowy picture of the Manhattan background of the early years of the century, a background of brownstone fronts and of family dinners, of bookishness and a passion for music, and of the escape of the liberal Jew into the Ethical Culture Society. *The Boy in the Sun* is not a book that will furnish propaganda for the pulpits. It is a more specialized study than Mr. Lewisohn's, innocent of any attempt at a solution of the Jewish Problem. Its stream-of-consciousness technique is effective, however, in its delineation of the adolescent life of the gifted boy with his ambivalent emotions.

In a short story called "A Cycle of Manhattan", Thyra Samter Winslow, uninvolved either in racial problems or in stylistic subtleties, has accomplished the most adequate novel of Jewish social background that has been done in America. With her curious technique of compressing the materials of a novel into the limits of a short tale—a technique often irritating because one wants her to say so much more than she is willing to say—Mrs. Winslow gives the history of the social progression of a Jewish family in New York City. In a style bald to the point of Dreiserian documentation, she follows her newly arrived immigrants from their tenement dwelling in Greenwich Village along the curve of their financial success through East Seventy-seventh street, the Bronx, Harlem, Riverside Drive, East Sixty-sixth street, and ends climatically with the return of the youngest and dilettante son to the early tenement dwelling rented now as a swanky studio. An excellent device of plot and one which enables her to portray the influence of economic status and changing background, in the observation of which Mrs. Winslow is unerring. Knowing that the men of an American household are negligible in the determination of its social status, she concentrates on the external lives of the women of the family—the family that began humbly as the Abraham Rosenheimers and ended triumphantly as the Lincoln Rosses. Mrs. Winslow knows exactly what her women wear and why. She knows the details of the successive adventures in interior decorating and their significance. Here is the family at the peak of its career:

> The house in East Sixty-sixth Street was rather nice. It was done in English things, mostly, painted walls and rather soft taffetas. There were some big easy chairs that could be pulled around, comfortably, in front of the fireplace. . . . Mrs. Ross never liked it.
>
> "It's too plain," she said, "nothing to it. No one would believe how much it cost you, Papa. Mrs. Sinsheimer has got an apartment on Park

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Avenue, just a block from Carolyn. Fourteen rooms. She had a decorator, too, but he got different things from this. It looks like something. We had a fine place on Riverside Drive and Dorothea drags us here, where there ain't even lights enough to see by, at night."

Still, Mrs. Ross found out, from what people said, that there must be something desirable about the new home.

This story of Mrs. Winslow's is an excellent study of the impingement of the American experience upon the characteristics and aptitudes of a Jewish family in a typical urban situation. It is a complete cycle of social metamorphosis, a saga of American domestic life.

The influence of the Jew in the business life of America, important and provocative material though it is, has been given surprisingly small attention in current fiction. Mrs. Winslow, it is true, has an astute enough understanding of her Papa Rosenheimer, the meek and indispensable foundation of the family ambition. But her tale is not primarily of him. Indeed the only sound study of the intrusion of the Jew into American business is a book that has received too little notice in criticism—Mr. Abraham Cahan's *The Rise of David Levinsky*. Mr. Cahan has detailed the social background and the business life of the enterprising Russian Jews of New York, and their struggle, not with the American manufacturers, but with the German Jews who had preceded them. The manner in which the large generosity of the German Jews was transformed into "prejudice" by the economic encroachments of the Russians makes a discerning tale of group psychology which may well furnish reflections on certain economic bases of anti-Semitism. Mr. Cahan has had no desire to cut his figures to the magazine readers' conception of what constitutes a Russian Jew. He knows his people thoroughly and he neither sentimentalizes nor caricatures them. His cool objectivity is gratifying to the reader fed up with the romantic attitude toward the Jew. Thus muses Levinsky as he thinks over his past:

I often convict myself of currying favor with the German Jews. But then German-American Jews curry favor with Portuguese-American Jews, just as we all curry favor with Gentiles and as American Gentiles curry favor with the aristocracy of Europe.

The novel is interesting not only as a Jewish study but as a contribution to the interpretations of American business life, a province in which our contemporary literature is surprisingly sterile, in spite of the large importance of business in the American mind.

The prosperous German-Jewish business man, whose secure social position gains the contemptuous envy of Mr. Cahan's Russians, is excellently done by Emanie Sachs in *Red Damask*. But his activities as a man of affairs are not of so much concern to Mrs. Sachs as are the pallid feminist strivings of her heroine. Through this young woman's eyes the business life of her father and his associates is viewed with the more or less veiled disdain characteristic of the modern sheltered woman who can see little that is adventurous in modern industry even while she accepts its rewards—an attitude that one suspects Mrs. Sachs of sharing, one which is quite in line with the feminization of much of our contemporary fiction, in which the dominant problems are the sexual and domestic maladjustments of women. It is the futile revolt of the young woman from the red-damask environment of Jewish prosperous conservatism that Mrs. Sachs portrays, a revolt that has already "dated", so rapidly are the *mores* disturbing even the Jewish domestic tradition. But if the book fails as modern exegesis, in the characterizations of the numerous and varied members of the urbane Hahl family Mrs. Sachs has done as delightful a piece of writing as has G. B. Stern in *The Matriarch*, and has fixed, as unforgettably as has Miss Stern in her portrait of a similar English group, a section of Jewish-American society.

In Marion Spitzer's story of feminine perturbation, a novel whose title, *Who Would*

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Be Free, obviously suggests struggle, the young woman finally effects a triumphant escape from her home, an escape which for Abby Hahl never quite comes off. There is in this tale of Miss Spitzer's more than a suggestion of autobiographical rancor, yet it is a rancor that gives edge to portraiture. The villain of her tale is The Family, that expected and proper villain of modern youth. Although both Miss Spitzer's young woman and Mrs. Sachs's believe that they are suffering from Jewishness, it is obvious that their complaint is mainly adolescence. Indeed the Jewish Family Institution, prison though it seems to them, appears from their records to have no thicker walls than those that surrounded Ann Veronica or Carol Kennicott.

Perhaps the Jewish-American bourgeoisie have in their social habits become so Americanized that they are no longer a distinctive study for the novelist. At least certain novels of the last few years appear to support this horrific conclusion. With the author's discreet manipulation of names the Jewish middle-class family become Anglicized, and by this change into respectability emerge as characteristic American middle-class folk. Babette Deutsch has turned the trick in her story *Brittle Heaven*, Edna Ferber in her best-seller novel, *The Girls*. For anyone who knows the conversation of urban Jewish women at a "luncheon" or an "afternoon" Miss Ferber's report of such gatherings, in her Chicago story, is veristic to the least detail. Recognizably Jewish too are many of the persons of her short stories—the two elderly women, for instance, who travel together in Europe, pretending to each other that they are still needed by their married children. Yet these tales are accepted by American readers as shrewdly accurate portraits of themselves, or at least of their aunts and cousins.

There are certain writers of the good old Nordic stock who are not, however, so easily deceived. They know that there is only one sort of Jew—the bounder Jew. Robert Herrick's novels contain him in contemptuous reference. Willa Cather has devoted a bitter story to the Jewish bounder, Ernest Hemingway has done his portrait in *The Sun Also Rises*. Edith Wharton recognizes only this Jew. For these writers, he is a symbol of modern social disintegration. Here, they say in effect, is what our subtle and discriminating Anglo-Saxon culture has come to—this contact with a type that is influencing and yet can never understand our values. Mrs. Wharton puts him in the midst of New York society in this fashon:

> A short man with a deceptively blond head, thick lips under a stubby blond moustache, and eyes like needles behind tortoiseshell-rimmed glasses, stood . . . bulging a glossy shirtfront and solitaire pearl toward the company. "Don't this lady dance?" he enquired, in a voice like melted butter, a few drops of which seemed to trickle down his lips and be licked back at intervals behind a thickly ringed hand.

Here is the Manhattan Jew whose combination of ability and vulgarity is particularly distasteful to the socially elect whose pleasure he serves as middleman of the arts. He is differentiated only by his dramatic success from the parvenu crowd of Fannie Hurst's amusing stories—the group that glitters in the upholstered restaurants of the apartment and family hotels. But while Miss Hurst finds her vulgar people understandable and lovable, to Miss Cather and Mrs. Wharton the Jewish upstart is both inscrutable and monstrous.

With the exception of four American stories the fictional locale of the Jew has been exclusively Manhattan, that city of the world's largest Jewish population. Edna Ferber, in an early novel, *Fanny Herself*, was the first novelist to give the situation of a characteristic Jewish middle-class family in a characteristic American small town, a town small enough to have no Jewish problem because there are too few Jews to create for themselves a homogeneous society. The beautifully written first half of Ludwig Lewisohn's *Upstream*, a piece of writing

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which, though autobiography, can be justly grouped with autobiographic fiction, tells the tale of the author's childhood and youth in the South, an imaginative adolescence in the home of cultivated German parents. Two recent novels use Milwaukee and a rough frontier town of Montana as backgrounds. But in both of these novels, unlike Mr. Lewisohn's where the background is sensitively felt and assimilated, the physical environment is accidental rather than relevant. Lawrence Drake's *Don't Call Me Clever* employs the Hemingway technique with a distinction especially successful in the conflict of the two Jewish brothers whose emotional involvement one with the other is the story's theme. In *Singermann* Myron Brinig gives a vigorous and detailed presentment of a single family, a sturdy immigrant brood who have sojourned in the West, but who, for all the influence of the locale on the family drama, might as well have been placed anywhere else in the United States.

These Russians of Mr. Brinig and Mr. Drake are not the immigrants of the muck-raking period and of the purple oratory of *The Melting Pot*, but characterizations decidedly more complex and more richly realized. They are not the picturesque and sentimentalized Jews of the popular magazines of two decades ago, when the infallible formula for a story of immigrant life was the cleavage between the generations. Nor are they the comedy Jews whose intrusion into fiction come via the vaudeville stage.

The comedy Jewish merchant is indeed becoming out-moded in the American story. The most successful examples of this genre were the partners Potash and Perlmutter, whose shrewd comments on the American scene had much the same flavor, though with a different accent, as those of Mr. Dooley and his side-kick Hennessy. If at times the author pushed them near caricature, Montague Glass's people at least had tang and authenticity, even in the minor characterizations of the family groups.

Milt Gross with his Nize Baby is the latest—perhaps the last—writer of the Jewish comedy school in American fiction. But Milt Gross's Semites are actually American of the Americans. There is no nostalgia in them for a lost Europe or Jerusalem, there are no shawled mothers striving to disentangle the bewilderments of the public school system, no bearded fathers uttering Hebrew maledictions against apostasy.

The tragic and the sentimental themes of the American-Jewish immigrant are perhaps gone forever, unless a new Act of Congress re-opens the doors of immigration. The little Gonorowskys are now either the mothers of families or successful graduates of the College of the City of New York.

What is the future of the fictional American Jew? American political democracy, the American public school, the department store, the theatre, the movies, the radio are quickly modifying external characteristics of speech, of dress, of deportment. The breakdown of orthodox religion has had its effect in the dramatic conversion of the second generation American Jew to a free-thinker and a radical. These various influences, operating on a group that is receiving no influx from Europe, are tending to wipe out the obvious differentiations of the Jew in American life and consequently in American fiction. On the other hand the last decade has seen a conscious Jewish cultural renascence which has touched the imagination of many young Jews harassed by their equivocal position. If this movement has sufficient vitality it will express itself in fiction, that flexible medium of modern self-revealment—and in fiction that will undoubtedly go into other forms than the realistic novel, a medium which is beginning to irk the talents of the younger writers. But how much impetus this movement carries it is still too early to say. The guess would be an extended one, ramifying into a discussion of the complex Jewish Question, a theme that continues to occupy many pages of exposition.

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COMMUNITY

by Sherlock Bronson Gass

I RECOUNT for what it is worth an experience which befell me on my first venture into the world, and which in my current inklings and later reflections seemed to throw a faint light on a very old problem. The experience itself occurred before the war, but the problem has outlived many cataclysms, and puts its question with sharper petulance after each one. Plato faced it long ago; and now Mr. Lippmann has faced it, and turned from it, in his *A Preface to Morals*—a book that to my eyes presents so neat a paradox that I am moved to record the reflections that make it seem so.

I had not the patience to wait and see whether I was a good American, but went at once to Paris and settled down under the happy circumstances of youth and freedom. My pension overlooked the Luxembourg Gardens, and this was the happiest of chances. In time I came to know the city in light and shadow. But on my first morning, as I looked down into the Gardens from my window in the mansard, something in the sight caught my imagination. Afterward, between other wanderings, it was to the Gardens that I came back for my best moments.

In my young ardor I had marked out for myself an austere life of reading and study. And Nature avenged herself in me with moments of rebellion and excursions into the city that were incredibly raw. But in the Gardens, with their gaiety and their peace, and with that wedding of spring and autumn in sun and leaves and crumbling statues that is their eternal note, it was impossible to be altogether a barbarian. For moments, as often as I cared to return, I could feel the touch of their urbanity, and hear the voice of a past that finds its accumulated echoes there in so lively a harmony.

It was impossible, too, perhaps, not to be a little ridiculous, a little romantic, as though it were reserved to me there to be no longer a little modern man in trousers, but the ultimate brooding spectator of that long pageant, and the receptacle of its significance. Accordingly I had my times of exaltation, a little drunk with the heady wine of such indulgences, a little self-conscious, and altogether absurd and happy.

And yet not altogether happy either as the daily hour of dinner drew near. The pension was quite perfect. I had been told of it in a steamer letter from a perhaps too literary friend, who praised it for "its exquisite table, its French charm, and above all for its conversation". The reality had bettered the description. And then, little by little, for all my young appetite, I began to dread the dinner hour. The light breakfast in my room, a sketchy luncheon on the boulevard and an adventure into the town or a stroll in the Gardens in the late afternoon left me famished. But I came to move toward the dinner table with a lingering reluctance.

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By the chances of an American schooling my French was scarcely elementary. I could read only stumblingly. It was with infinite chagrin that I got about the city, ordered my *boc*, and bought my caporal. But at the dinner table, with its quiet procession of courses and leisurely intervals, where talk flowed with the continuity and variety of drama, I was dumb.

In my room in the morning I was prospectively steeping myself in the traditions of a great civilization, companion of Montaigne, of Racine, of La Bruyère, of Pascal, of Joubert, of Saint-Beuve. In the Gardens in the afternoon I seemed to be the repository of a past that distilled out for me, from its hints of Attica and Rome, from Middle Age and Renaissance, the essence of its greater moments. And there at the dinner table, while talk flowed and undulated about me, I sat steeped in the exquisite consciousness of idiocy. It was not that I could not understand. I could understand but little, indeed. It was not that I could not talk. I could not talk at all. It was simply that I could not think.

I could think, of course, in my own tongue, though there was no one there to whom I could reveal my powers. I soothed myself with this reflection, but the solace came in my own tongue and left me, even to my own sense, in the present odor of imbecility. Barring my own tongue what could I think? A few childish thoughts that might have been culled for a primer, a few wants of the body, a few vulgarities of the street and the press—and that was all. If some chance had erased my native idiom from my memory I should have been reduced to this level even in the privacy of my own reflections. I was startled.

The chagrin wore off in time, as was natural. My case was remediable and I was on the way to recovery. And even at the moment it was possible to translate my experience into comfortable commonplaces. Language was the medium of thought and communication. No one could think and communicate in a language that he did not know. I retained from the experience, however, the memory of a moment of stark insight. I had had a look into vacuity, and by virtue of a saving resource I had been able to read the meaning of it in print of life.

Even so I should have forgotten the shock of it, except as a patch of color in the foregone pageantry of youth, if a hazard had not promptly linked it with another experience which awakened my curiosity. My second month was intermittently occupied with the affairs of an old tutor of mine at home, a man of foreign birth and of touching simplicity and dignity of mind and character. This old friend had been transplanted at the romantic age, too young to have lost his first illusions and too old to have been deeply affected by America. He had become an unworldly and unsuccessful scholar. And he was burdened with two American-born sons who were a scandal. The boys were not only wild; they were gross and commonplace. And with nothing of their own to be proud of they were ashamed of their father, of their father's foreign tongue, his foreign traditions, his foreign English. One of them was now missing from home and was presumed—falsely as it turned out—to be in Paris. An appeal from the father set me on a hopeless search, with the aid of the Paris Préfecture.

I had no liking for this quest, and its griefs were sharpened by my poverty in the language. I had no liking for the object of my search. I dare say I sulked in private. Few things are so hard to hear as a sense of superiority. But one afternoon, after an exhausting day spent in the business, when I had gone into the Gardens to nurse my grievance and await the ordeal of dinner, I had a perverse and chastening thought.

The young barbarian of my quest and his disastrous brother were unspeakably commonplace. But I, myself! Limit my own mind to what it could think and utter in

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the civilized community of the dinner table and nothing under heaven could be more commonplace than I.

As for them, they had long ago not only rebelled against their father and the language of that unhappy household, but had resisted the feeble efforts of the schools in the language of their own community. On the streets they had picked up an *umgang Sprache* richer than my own in French, indeed, but enough like it in quality to let me guess something of the dimensions and colors of the conscious world they were confined to. And now all three, they at home and I here, were at one in our common disability to enter into the civilization we were planted in the midst of.

In the sudden shock of this perception I seemed then to catch the glint of an obscure facet of that many-sided and much-questioned jewel, civilization. I did little more than glimpse it then, a point of light when I looked intently from a certain angle. Later, when the war brought home to everyone the fear lest civilization be lost, and later still when the tarnished pageant of the peace made it apparent that none could agree what it was that was to be lost or saved, I came back to hunt again for that angle, and catch the gleam of that obscure facet.

II

Language is a vehicle—a fleet of vehicles, indeed—and the term *civilization* is an omnibus, a promiscuous public conveyance. The popular definition, in terms of a standard of living, the radio and the airplane, the auto and the bathtub, is comprehensible but hardly satisfying. The scholar, going deeper, cites the basic ideas, flowering in customs, institutions and arts, in accordance with which life here or there has become harmonious and fruitful. But his explanation is an afterthought. One civilization has differed from another in precisely these basic ideas. Not, of course, that ideas are irrelevant. And the tantalizing fact is that ideas have so flowered. There have been civilizations. But ideas are not a civilization, as every builder of Utopia, from Plato down, has bitterly discovered. The dreamer in his attic may—conceivably—think ideas so valid that if the essence did lie in the idea his dream would come to flower in a civilization fairer than any yet attained.

Does the clue, then, lie in a widespread racial intelligence? Some races have attained a civilization and others not. One thinks of the Greeks. But the case of the Greeks is equivocal. Greek civilization went the primrose way. And racially the Greeks could have been no less intelligent in blight than in flower.

Great ideas and a high general intelligence are unequivocally the substance and staple in the ferment of a great civilization. And it is possible, I think, to look about America today and discover both. But granting both, no one, I think looks with complacency on the drift of American civilization. Perturbation at the spectacle has given rise, indeed, to some of the greatest of our ideas, as a like perturbation gave rise to Plato's. But even if the eminently right ideas were conceived and uttered, would they fare any better than Plato's? It is quite possible in the din of conflicting isms—humanism and modernism, individualism and socialism, moralism and amoralism, estheticism and industrialism—the eminently right ideas have been uttered. But apparently they are not faring any better than Plato's. The yeast is missing.

The trouble with Utopia—and by the same token, with lesser ideas—is that it is lodged and lives its ardent life in the single mind and heart of its conceiver. The hitch lies in the gap between the one and the many. Somewhere in the gap lies the *tertium quid*, in default of which the greatest of ideas go begging, and the most intelligent many fly off in centrifugal diversity. Civilizations rise and fall. And when they fall there are still more ideas available than when they rise—

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all the old and all the new—and the many are no less intelligent. But something has departed.

Is it tenable to hold, therefore, that the pursuit of the idea is the pursuit of the wrong quarry? Not, indeed, that that pursuit should ever cease. But civilization is an emanation. It is the happiness of a community; and as with individual happiness, to pursue it directly is to defeat it. It is a flower. And the care which produces the cultivated flower goes to the soil and the planting and the plant.

It is in the nature of the discoursing mind, the producer of ideas, that it does not create its ultimate premisses, but accepts them. They are not rational but irrational. And two minds cannot coincide in the same thought, cannot think the same thought, unless they start from the same irrational grounds. If a civilization lies in the coöperations and harmonies that follow upon the common possession of basic ideas, it is clear that such a consummation is impossible unless many minds are able to think those ideas. The direction of human energies in pursuit of a civilization would therefore seem to be, not, in the first place, toward the promulgation of ideas, but toward the cultivation of the soil of community.

The state of a man's mind as it incubates a thought, and before he finds words to express it, is utterly his own, isolated, hidden, elusive even to himself. His process in communicating it is one of discovering what particles of consciousness, from the fund of common particles which his tradition has identified for him and for others, will best represent it. Here is his move from the utter isolation and idiosyncrasy of his own fluid consciousness to community with other minds.

Those others are likewise fluid and idiosyncratic in their own native state, and can only meet his mind on the same spots by virtue of a prior agreement upon these particles of meaning. There is nothing new to him or to them in these particles of meaning, these arbitrary articulations. They are all old stuff. It is precisely because they are old stuff that he and they can get together at all.

Here is the meeting place—the point where community succeeds—or fails. These are the common irrational premisses, prior to thought itself, prior to the play of opinion and prejudice, upon which all mutual comprehension is built. And the measure in which any idea can be thought alike by various minds, and hence the measure in which any idea can gain community and effect the harmony of civilization, hangs upon community at this point.

Do these premisses subtly differ from mind to mind? One may still think with his own, but all his give and take of thought is aberred in the transmission. If other minds differ likewise among themselves they too are subtly or grossly at sixes and sevens. The discrepancies that come from this cause are not open disagreements, not disagreements at all; they are undetected obliquities, construed from the same symbols but disparate in the actualities of thought for which the symbols stand.

Given a high degree of community here and momentous consequences follow—mutual understanding, precision and clarity of utterance, and hence a full free current of ideas and a telling play of criticism. So much goes without saying. But something else more subtle happens too. Intellect and sympathy are not far apart. "He speaks our language" is a slang phrase that witnesses the warmth and comfort that comes to the simplest of us from understanding and being understood. The feeling of friendship is almost definable as utter mutual comprehension—community in the silent acceptances out of which communication is built. And perhaps something of the hostilities amid which a civilization declines may be accounted for by the incomprehensions that arise when community in these silent acceptances disappears.

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III

As I sat on the bench in the Luxembourg Gardens, roiled with the day's chagrins and awaiting the ordeal of the dinner table, I seemed to glimpse something like a clue to this dilemma. In a flash of understanding I looked on those young barbarians at home with new eyes. There they were, as I in my daily hour of imbecility here, unable to enter the civilization they were confronting. They were unable to think its thoughts. Their own thoughts were moulded by what they could build, and limited to what they could build, with the meagre articulate elements of consciousness they had accumulated. And even so each thought was marred for community by heaven knew what private discrepancy of their own in each articulate element. Communication for them, give or take, was not communication. What they thought in response to the communications of others, or what they thought behind their own utterance—no one could know.

Neither they nor I were quite representative. I was in a foreign land trying to think in a foreign tongue. They were utterly untrained and undisciplined—of the lees that lie at the bottom of every draught of mankind. But if we, in our various ways, were extreme, we exaggerated what is possible in a measure from top to bottom. Training and discipline carry no farther than they go. And in America of the post-war period it is apparent that even training and discipline are in league with the agents of disparity. They have become more and more technological, and hence more and more centrifugal.

Every drift, when it gathers enough momentum, acquires a philosophy. And the drift of modernism toward a civilization of technicians has found its philosopher in Mr. Lippmann. But his *A Preface to Morals* is a whopping anacoluthon. Had Mr. Lippmann followed the precept of its conclusion he could never have thought out its premisses.

Its precept points toward a universality of technologists. Now a technology is a technology because it is a special way of thinking in a special field of thought, in the care of a specialized group of men. And the first half of *A Preface to Morals*, profound and moving, clarifying in its analyses and penetrating in its insights, is the product of a mind disciplined, not in a technology, but in a field of thought common to all mankind. It is the discourse of a mind thinking with the fiery particles of consciousness that have been articulated and enriched and clarified in the long travail of thought in the moral tradition, and acquired in brooding contact with the literature and philosophy of that tradition. The centrifugal drift may indeed go on, but it will go on as a drift, not as a philosophy. For community in the philosophy of it could come only in virtue of a common and not a technical discipline.

A universality of technologists would leave untouched the problem of civilization. For the pursuit of every technical branch of knowledge is tolerated by a judgment of its value, and that judgment lies in a field of thought outside the technology itself—a field of thought that belongs to the community at large. The saving discipline of civilization is one that will make for community in the premisses of such judgments.

That discipline is the one that our modernism has foregone. Chemist is in community with chemist precisely because the particles with which they think are, through the discipline of that technology, identical in both minds. The like task in the larger field of governing evaluations is less simple, but by the same token the more imperative.

IV

Our ears are deafened with the clash of opinion, and our hair winnowed by the veering winds of doctrine. But to one observer, at least, the agonists in this field of our governing evaluations seem forever to

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miss each other, blindfold boxers sparring the air. Is it I who am out of step and not the regiment? Now and again I come upon a writer who touches me home, whose terms are rich with meaning, and whose thought marches with a fine clarity to a moving conclusion. As I read, my mind and heart leap with the ardor of utter assent. It seems to me then, as it probably seemed to the writer himself, that could such ideas prevail there might flow from them a lively and harmonious civilization. But apparently they do not touch many others in the same way. I have a friend who is a chemist, a neighbor who is a broker, a colleague who is an engineer. They see nothing in those ideas.

On the margin of despair I am saved by the humor of the situation. I am, I find, like everyone else. I have had some measure of discipline in a certain province. In that province I have filled my irrational premisses with some plenitude of matter. And those who seem to me so reasonable and so pregnant are those whose fiery particles are my fiery particles, whose premisses are my premisses, and whose thoughts, as a consequence, I can think.

But the question remains. Can any idea gain a broad community in America to-day? In asking this I am not thinking of particular ideas, but of the conditions behind all ideas. My own vision, when the situation rises most vividly before me, is of two persons discoursing to each other in a common tongue the terms of which, unwittingly to each, mean subtly different things to each. The vision is not quite fantastic. I have learned the meaning of a kindly tolerance in the eyes of my chemical friend, of a hostile contempt in the eyes of my broker neighbor, of a curt impatience in the eyes of my engineering colleague, when I ride my favorite high horse before them. Do I have an answering look of the kind for them when they ride theirs? Certainly their meanings seem thin and cold to me, when I grasp them at all.

Ordinarily we hit it off well enough together, but on a desperately low plane. We do not sink our differences; we sink below them. We find common ground far beneath our cultivated levels. And we have no warm ardor for each other in consequence. If civilization springs from community—from whatever community there is—ours would be a low one. We should put up with it, but we should have no high respect for it. All that any one of us could say for it would be that it was more tolerable than the alternative represented by any one of the others.

The matter is not one for dogmatism, and proof is impossible. It remains a question only, a point of curiosity and wonder—whether at least one of the obscure factors behind the rise and fall of civilizations may not be the degree of community in the ultimate premisses of communication. For on community at this point hangs the possibility of mutual understanding. And on the skirts of mutual understanding hang other significant things—harmony or disharmony, friendliness or hostility, the depth and breadth of the current of ideas, the precision and pertinence of criticism. Understanding makes for good will, and misunderstanding makes for bad; understanding heartens the labor of thought, misunderstanding disheartens it. A civilization that cannot understand its own ideas is bankrupt.

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LITERARY PARASITES

by Clarice Lorenz Aiken

Few people realize the insuperable problems that meddlers, sycophants and parasites create for the average author. Lunatics and crooks are only a few of the nuisances. That friends and acquaintances should take more liberties than strangers is not so surprising as that these otherwise self-respecting persons should resent being called charity-seekers, for they deserve a much ruder name. They interfere with an author's work and embitter him into the bargain.

The rich and famous have always been set upon by parasites. "Poor but proud" people beg money outright from Edison, Ford and Rockefeller, while *soi-disant* prodigies send manuscripts to successful authors for free criticism. There is not much to choose between these two evils: the first picks the philanthropist's pockets, the second the author's brains. Since literature is the most universal mode of expression and has of all the arts the widest appeal, it attracts the greatest number of hangers-on. More persons to the square acre think they are born writers than born anything else, and these neophytes are the most palpable offenders. With a *dégagé* "I hope I am not imposing on you", they send manuscripts by the cartload, assuming that when genius meets genius he is only too happy to serve. They seem to feel that the successful author was invented for their guidance alone. Now few authors are so callous as to turn a deaf ear to real talent; they cannot easily forget the value of timely encouragement in their own early struggles. In order to get any work done, however, they have been obliged to barricade themselves behind stone walls, such a menace has this One-for-all, All-for-one Brotherhood become.

Intrusions by letter are the commonest impositions; verbal requests for various favors follow a close second, and there are a hundred other insidious forms. Once in a blue moon the author will receive an anonymous letter expressing delight at his latest book and asking for nothing in return. But such letters are as rare as unexpected checks. Most letters are not even worth the time required to open and discard them. Here are three such specimens:

"I have read your poems which I found to be beautiful, and most enjoyable. Truly they are remarkable works which distinguish the poet as a very brilliant and gifted one. In some of your poems is revealed the writer's deep understanding of both the cruelty and the wonder of life. Others are beautiful lyrics, musical and poignant. You write with such feeling, such depth! It is evident that you have a true understanding of human nature. In your great and powerful poems is revealed the personality of the poet. My authors' scrapbook contains copies of some of your poems. Above the poems I have pasted pictures that harmonize with their moods." (Now comes the crafty lady's motive!) "If you have copies of your picture among advertisements of your poetry, please send me

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one as I would love to have it for my scrapbook. I thank you for the fine philosophy and advice and deep understanding of human nature expressed in your writing. A great writer like you must be a person of great understanding of human nature. You certainly possess unusual knowledge and deep sympathy. Therefore, I would love to receive a personal reply from you, if you please. Of course, I realize that I am merely a stranger to you, but your answer would be doing me a very great honor indeed! Unless you consider them too personal, please answer the following questions: Which do you consider the greater influence—heredity or environment? Why? How can one face the death of a beloved one if reason forbids one to believe in immortality? What are the titles of your favorite books, and who are your favorite authors? Which of your own poems do you favor, and why? What are your hobbies? What is your philosophy of life? What do you consider that the world needs most in order to make it a better place in which to live? What, would you say, is the greatest thing in life? As I know you are a very busy person, please answer as many of my questions as you may have time for. My friends and I would certainly be grateful if you answered even one. God bless you and may you continue your great gift for writing for many future years."

This requires no comment other than that the correspondent signs herself as being in care of a doctor, and writes to a poet whose works are so abstruse and erudite as to baffle even college professors.

Here is another gem to tickle the vanity of an author:

"I am a sixteen-year-old High School student. You are my favorite author and I'm writing an essay based on your work for our school exhibit. I'd like to win the exhibit. Being a prospective writer I'd like some present success, experience and encouragement. The winning of the essay will provide me with those three assets. You can help me win the exhibit by doing a little favor for me. On any kind of paper write for me one of your poems. Write it in your own handwriting as it makes a more curious" (!) "appearance. I'm sure if I read your poem as an introduction to my essay, that the judges will surely concede the winning to me. If I'm ever a success in life, I'll attribute it all to you. I'll always prize the poem you send me and will never forget what you've done. I wish I had the eloquence of a rich vocabulary to be able to thank you enough for this favor. Nothing could make me happier. I could go on writing for pages and pages more, praising you, but owing to the value of your time, I'll close here, hoping you'll aid me. I wish you a bright healthy prosperous future and thank you to the utmost."

How do these parasites defend themselves? Wherein does the artist differ from the grocer, lawyer, or doctor, from whom they would never expect to get something for nothing? Presumably—if they think about the matter at all—they would say that art is its own reward, above anything so sordid as remuneration. So it is, but if the artist is to be allowed to fill his function as such, he should also be allowed to live. And the world has made it possible for but few geniuses to make a living by their art. If the world will not endow the artist, the artist cannot be expected to endow the world.

How else do these parasites defend themselves? They say that art is like religion; that the artist, like the minister, is a public servant, his gift belonging to humanity. We counter with the same reply. The minister at least gets a salary, no matter what his inspirational powers amount to. As a matter of fact, art plays but a small part in our utilitarian culture. A novel is not so vital to us as food and clothing. We are Philistines, and *could* exist without this "gift to humanity".

There are, however, three chief reasons for these impositions on authors. The first is the patronizing attitude. The public is all too inclined to feel that the author is its toy, that

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he exists by its whim and tolerance. Comparatively speaking, the articles he manufactures are luxuries, for which reason their prices are not so fixed and arbitrary as the prices of necessities. The second reason is the hero-worshipping attitude. The famous man always has been in the public eye and consciousness, and by some curious twist, the world elects him godfather. He should feel pleased at being made much of, for is he not being asked to share his mind? Is he not as a blushing débutante who scatters her smiles and favors among a circle of adoring suitors?

The third reason centers around the author's unsystematic life. Consider the average writer: his name is not printed in formidable letters on an office door—he has no office, no office hours, no secretary. Why should his time not be at the disposal of you and me and our grandmothers? His art is not regarded seriously, because in most cases he is obliged to reserve it as an avocation. He cannot earn the livelihood by it that he can by teaching, for example. If he is without means —and poets are no longer supported by patrons of art—he cannot afford a buffer. All too easily taken in by the clamor of these "lost and distracted souls", he surrenders his time and services. Moreover, since his work strikes a depth not reached by the best-seller author, the type of letter he is apt to get is more compelling, more profound. Scott Fitzgerald, we risk saying, receives few letters which confess a psychic problem or reveal a spiritual kinship. An obscure, esoteric poet like T. S. Eliot probably receives many.

The most unforgivable molestations are written, not by those who have been magnetized or shattered by a great book, but by mendicants who wish only to attach themselves to a celebrity and shine by reflected glory. They have nothing to give, although they can well afford to "pay as they go". They believe that a poor poet should feel flattered at being noticed. They assume that his humble demands, carved down by plain living, will preclude the probability of a fee.

Consider the plight of the hapless author who sits down to breakfast and finds a mountain of letters, most of them in strange handwriting. Why should he not grow perceptibly inhuman as he reads? He is swamped with requests for inscribed books from librarians in North Carolina, Oklahoma, and Maine. (Each state has libraries for colored people, sailors, consumptives, Old Ladies' Homes, convicts, for the newly converted, etc.) Requests come to write a preface for a hopeless book of verse, the virgin effort of a friend's mother-in-law's second cousin; requests for his autograph, his photograph, his favorite poem, story or novel; requests to criticize a rejected manuscript (he is promised half the author's royalties if it is published); invitations to tea to meet an ambitious young playwright who needs stimulus; urgent notes to lend his name to charities, movements, causes, which publicity-stunt devotees assure him will bring great prestige. He is asked won't he please copy out his favorite work in longhand for Susie Bean's scrapbook; won't he please write letters of introduction to other celebrities in the interests of a prospective editorial job; he is asked to judge short story contests and award prizes—a privilege generally ending in polite massacre—for which the only compensation is "gratitude, appreciation", and other such coins to help buy shoes for the little ones.

He is hunted down by antiquated bores and meddlers from Vermont who point out his mission, message and duty. If he is an anthologist, so much the worse for him. His throat is cut by indignant champions of an omitted author: Where is Ella Wheeler Wilcox? Why is Robert Service omitted? What about Lydia Conchshell from Keokuk, Iowa? Friends press him to do an obituary of a fellow poet, an assignment which by comparison leaves death itself without a sting. Female sycophants serenade him with love poems. Destitute widows write heart-breaking letters from the fastnesses of the Catskills, imploring the author for God's sake to send

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them ten dollars in exchange for which they will forward mother's wedding ring. Crushed egos write claiming genealogical connection, or ask the author to help trace what he hopes will be "their" family tree. "Shy" literary acquaintances, on the fringe, request him to review their first effort, which means favorably, of course; after which the review will be used as a publisher's blurb. (If the book does not warrant a favorable review, the author loses the sender's friendship.)

Denis Mackail can tell the world how to start the day wrong. After writing *The Flower Show*, he was accused by one who signed himself "Yours never", of being a Bolshevik and slum-dweller.

Of literary crooks, plagiarists, and speculators, too much cannot be said. Charles F. Heartman in the Author's League *Bulletin* tells of a most brazen affair, of which William Dean Howells was the victim. A young collector-dealer introduced himself to Howells as an admirer and rather well-off collector. Howells finally consented to inscribe the set of first editions which this collector-dealer owned. This young man took fifty-six books to Howells, who inscribed them. Less than five weeks later they appeared in an auction sale. Apparently they had been catalogued in advance and quietly slipped into the sale at the last minute. "Some clever manipulators," says Mr. Heartman, "have talked and written themselves into the graces of authors to such an extent that they succeeded in getting original manuscripts from them, and I know of cases where authors, in order to oblige an admirer, copied large portions of their works, which the speculating collectors palmed off as original manuscripts, for high prices.

"Minor authors are not the only ones thus victimized," Mr. Heartman goes on to say. "Conrad, Shaw, Masefield, Machen, Drinkwater, Dreiser, Moore—in fact any author that is wanted by collectors has been gulled. In some cases the speculator has found ways and means to victimize the same author several times by using fictitious names and addresses. The cleverness of some of the sharks can be imagined when I mention here that a certain member of this tribe made a bet some time ago that he could get any book inscribed from any six authors the other party would name. He lost his bet, however, because he was unable to get a book inscribed by E. A. Robinson."

England can testify to what havoc autograph collectors have reduced banks. Creditors who received checks signed by Shaw, Galsworthy, Hardy and other notables, would neglect cashing them, hoping for a bullish autograph market. When a bearish market came along, hundreds of these checks would suddenly be dumped on the bank cashiers, resulting in a colossal drainage of money. To outwit these pests, such checks are now signed by the authors' secretaries.

The variety of approach in some letters to authors is so stupendous as to give the author a positive inferiority complex. One correspondent pretended to have heard a divine voice suddenly recite a familiar line of verse. She immediately wrote to the author whom she thought responsible, asking him to corroborate her guess. If it was his, would he be so good as to send the line to her in longhand, as she wished to show her friends how occult she was. When Conrad Aiken wrote his *Skepticisms*, he received a thundering note from a gentleman in New York State, who introduced himself as the greatest poet since Homer, Dante and Shakespeare, and complained with an air of astonishment at having been omitted from a book of critical survey of poetry. After his name, this correspondent added "Supreme Spirit of the Spheres".

There are the downtrodden who are always recognizing themselves in stories and who ask the author post-haste to help develop their personalities. There are hundreds of adroitly framed letters from business firms: photographers offering to take the author's face and present him with three prints. (If the author

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is greenhorn enough to accept, they begin an insidious hypnotic blast of salesmanship, with the result that he leaves behind a check for three additional photographs.) There are the "section pests", deadly groups of Serious Thinkers who press their "native sons" for some token of affection, some souvenir which they can exhibit proudly, as having come from a former citizen of *their* state. Here is a typical specimen received by a well known poet:

"You were so sweet to me last year when I was preparing an essay on American Writers Across the Sea. Now I need you again, and am ashamed to write you". (This shame she stoically conceals.) "I am told this time to talk about California's Literary Output Since 1880. That of course includes you. For California claims you. Am I too presumptuous in asking you to tell me a little more of yourself? Those of you who are alive, intensely, I want to make the major part of the paper. One more request: Would you mind my using any part or all of your letter in an article I hope to prepare for magazine sale? If you are willing, I shall be glad. If not, I shall abide by your wishes, of course." (Enchanting humility!) "Thank you for anything else you will tell me of ——, of whom we Californians are very poud!"

A sense of humor and a waste-basket are the only remedies for such afflictions.

If the author's name occurs in the telephone book, he is called up instead of written to. Joseph Auslander had to have his telephone removed because ladies with floating ambitions were making his life a veritable hell. A lecturing poet complained that many amateurs whom he has met socially send gifts of their books with the request that he write them a short comment for purposes of advertising. The dilemma between offending one who has social claims on you or sacrificing his critical standards is one the solution of which he does not care to divulge.

Elsie Singmaster's mail staggers her afresh each morning. "Dear Madam," she read one morning, "My daughter has written a very good story which was published in her High School magazine. She does not intend to pursue a literary life, having good matrimonial prospects. Do you want to make an offer for the plot of her story for your own use? Answer, stating price you will pay, and I will forward story if price is high enough."

Although Gamaliel Bradford insists he has not yet lost the zest that comes from having a charming woman (as to the charm he is willing to give the benefit of the doubt) ask for his autograph or photograph, he *is* annoyed when the petitioner neglects to enclose postage. Henry Beston is also mellow and old-fashioned. To him the only parasitic nuisances (which go into the waste-basket at once) are "the increasingly numerous biographical questionnaires sent me by the editors of so-called reference books. There are a number of such books which cater to the vanity of the tenth-rate, and apparently make a very good thing of it. The questionnaires are long, absurd and impudent. Everybody who writes gets one, including the office cat".

Edna Ferber cries hoarsely when the subject of nuisances is mentioned: "My feelings about this tribe are so strong and so bitter that I cannot even give an account of my experience with them. I am the sworn enemy of all such brain-pickers, symposia-writers, autograph-hunters, etc. I never answer their letters. I refuse to talk with them on the telephone. I shoot them at sight".

Corra Harris is besieged with problems of a supernatural nature. The public thinks she is God's private secretary. "One lady wanted to know if I was sure she would meet her dear husband, who has just died, in heaven. He was a 'good man'. Another wants me to lend her a thousand dollars to bail (or is it bale?) her husband out of jail. He also is a 'good man'."

Booth Tarkington airs his troubles through his wife:

"I could write a whole book on what I think about the people who are forever ask-

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ing for Heaven knows whatnot. So much of this kind of mail comes to us every day that I would not have time to do anything else if I were at all conscientious about it, which I am not. The great number of requests for autographs go immediately into the waste-basket. If students in English classes write for information or material of some sort about my husband, I quickly enclose a small pamphlet which is issued for that purpose, and which is a great help to me. Manuscripts for criticism are promptly returned with polite notes, for how can a man do his own work if he is continually having to do the work of others? People do not go into offices and make demands upon the time of business men in this fashion, and I should like a psychiatrist to tell me what kind of mania it is that prompts such demands upon a well known writer".

Thornton Burgess is another author who owes the world a living: "My troubles as an author," he testifies, "are nothing as compared with the flood of letters that come to me as a naturalist, because of my radio broadcasts. Apparently I am supposed to be a living encyclopedia. One correspondent says, 'I have a white albino, I would like your opinion of them'. Another lady writes in and asks me to please send her a cure for rheumatism, as she has been house-ridden for several years. Another wants to know why the feathers fall from a canary's head; and a fourth one what makes her goldfish sick. And only about one in fifty ever sends a stamp or a self-addressed envelope.

"Requests for autographs come mostly from children, and I do not find these an imposition. I am even willing to credit the little folks with not realizing that they should send a stamp. I cannot be so lenient with adults, however. These are nothing to those who write in and want to know how they can become famous. They want to know all about how I did it, and what I would advise them to do. They send me verses—I don't say poems—and ask me to criticize them. They send me stories worse than the verses and ask me to criticize them. They want to know where they can send these and how to approach editors and publishers. The worst of it is that, reading between the lines, I can see people in tight circumstances, hoping that they can add to their incomes a little by means of their pens. One needs to be utterly lacking in sympathy and that is quite impossible. So, quite aside from the time and trouble of answering is the inability to banish these people from one's mind. One feels very helpless, and helplessness isn't a pleasant feeling. After all, it is entirely thoughtlessness. With all these people, it never occurs to any of them that anybody besides themselves ever thought of asking a favor. It seems a little thing to the individual to ask one or two questions, and it doesn't enter that individual's head that a few hundred others have had that same happy thought."

Arthur Stringer makes moan over an abomination that will find a large answering chorus: "A new and growing evil," he says, "which seems to be encouraged by English teachers in public schools, is the pest of school children writing for autographs and life sketches, because, as they claim, they are 'studying' a certain author in their class-work. Radio has produced a new species of parasite. The anthologists, authentic and fictitious, also bother authors a great deal. The Authors' League, as you know, has advised authors to disregard requests for autographs, unless paid for. It is so seldom that I get such a request, however, being such small potatoes in the literary field, that the wine of flattery invariably weakens professional determination, and I blithely send back my name solemnly written on an up-slope, in violet ink."

Bertrand Russell writes: "In common with other authors, I suffer a good deal from persons who think that an author ought to do their work for them. Apart from autograph hunters, I get large numbers of letters from persons who wish me to copy out for them

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the appropriate entry in *Who's Who*, or ask me my opinion on points which I have fully discussed in print. I get many letters from Hindus, beseeching me to adopt some form of mysticism; from young Americans, asking me where I think the line should be drawn in petting; and from Poles, urging me to admit that while all other nationalism may be bad that of Poland is wholly noble. I get letters from engineers who cannot understand Einstein, and from persons who think that I cannot understand Genesis, and from husbands whose wives have deserted them—not (they say) that that would matter, but the wives have taken the furniture with them, and what in these circumstances should an enlightened male do? I get letters from Jews to say that Solomon was not a polygamist, and from Catholics to say that Torquemada was not a persecutor. I get letters (concerning whose genuineness I am suspicious) trying to get me to advocate abortion, and I get letters from young mothers asking my opinion of bottle-feeding".

Louis Untermeyer is another author to include school children in the category of nuisances. For him a few of the worst bedeviling sources are these:

"1. The Literary ladies who have to write articles for the Thursday Afternoon Women's Club and who want you to write their articles for them. Sometimes they are frank and tell you that they have to read a 'paper' about your work and that they really know nothing about it, and would you please help them out. Sometimes they pretend to know 'all' about you and all they want are a few private details which are notably lacking from *Who's Who* and which they would like to talk about in a pleasant, intimate way.

"2. The Young Things—and sometimes the Older Things—who are majoring in English or taking post-graduate work. These are usually preparing a Thesis and, to help them get their Doctorate, all they ask you to do is to fill in the gaps of their ignorance (which is usually as large as their Thesis) and help them get the degree to which they are so rarely entitled. Their requests are usually 'very simple'—ranging from a condensed history of Imagism to the name and street address of Emily Dickinson's lover.

"3. I can be facetious about the two preceding ones; I become frenetic when I consider this category: these are the pupils in grammar and high school who write you, usually at the request of their teachers. They are the hardest to deal with because they are really the most appealing. They are always 'studying' your work or have chosen you as their 'favorite poet' and your word always means the 'future of poetry' to them. Their naïveté does not make them less of a nuisance. Since literacy has grown so enormously in These States, practically every one who writes receives no less than a half dozen of such pupils' letters per week. At first I tried to answer them myself. My replies became more and more casual. Then my secretary took up the task. Finally even she became swamped in the attempt and the last I saw of her as I left for Michigan last week was the tip of her nose desperately trying to keep above the flood.

"4. I was about to say that these three are are worst. But by secretary reminds me that the very *ne plus ultra* of the Worst are the mothers (and, once in a while the fathers) with little Nathalia Cranes up their sleeves. Somehow or other they usually live in the Bronx. But, whatever their habitat, all they ask is to have their *Wunderkind* discovered —('Patricia has been writing ever since she was seven years old and, though of course we are not professional critics, we think she has a great talent and that she should no longer hide her light under a bushel' . . . to which I often would like to reply that she should go hide her head in one!) As I was saying, all they ask is that you acclaim their prodigy —better still, publish her. If I tell them that I am too busy to read the jingles of their Jennies, they are hurt. If I criticize them (as I do once in twenty times) they are hurt. If

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I tell them (as I sometimes do) that a child should be allowed to write but not be criticized and certainly not published, they are hurt. If I do nothing, they are hurt. So you see. . . .

"And then there are the snappy correspondents who write in asking for autographs but insist that I do not merely say 'Cordially yours', but 'write something interesting'. And the jerkwater colleges and small libraries that cannot afford to buy books but would be 'honored' to have 'a more or less complete set of your great works'".

Among other requests received in one week's mail is the following sent Mr. Untermeyer by a "fellow poet": "Am 21. Poetic at heart. Artistically inclined. For years have written in my autobiography for my own pleasures, at times for the public. Frankly speaking, am industrious and work like a devil both day and night at my own pursuits. It's terribly maddening when I'm forced to work for others who do not appreciate or understand a poet. At times the world is my enemy, yet I fall in love and live in the dream-world, yet I wander listlessly in the city streets, writing poetry. Am working on a book of poetry for the Harbor Press poetry contest. Would you be willing to read my manuscript and write me an introduction? Deadline, May 15, 1930".

The canker which this whole Odyssey of human needs and greeds engenders in authors is expressed with economy in a note which Mr. Untermeyer's secretary recently sent to her absent employer, with a batch of these "requests":

"Here's your chance! Don't forget the people who not only want your autograph, but demand that you 'please make it interesting'. And those who have made a hobby 'since they were very little children' of collecting books, etc., of great people and want you to be represented in that collection by contributing something. And those who 'take the liberty' of sending you anywhere from three to three hundred poems and ask you to give your opinion and a detailed criticism of each poem. And those who just want your general advice on What Every Young Poet Should Know . . . And . . . Go to it. And don't think there has been a lull in the autograph-collecting business, either. Most of these requests leave my heart as cold as it is supposed to be; they never find their way to your hands."

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T. E. B.

by Anne Kimball Tuell

It is not quite to our modern credit that T. E. Brown has fallen so far out of mind, except for two or three lyrics adrift through the anthologies. Brown at least would never hold us excused, blessed as he was with a knack for literary pieties and instructed admirations. "Fancy," he writes, "going into the presence of your Maker and having to admit that you have never read *The Fortunes of Nigel*." His own claims were more modest. He would never have seriously placed his minor abundance beside the larger plenties. But he would feel some surprise unpickled by corrosive vanity to conceive a generation of readers all unaware of *Fo'c's'le Yarns* or of that "rum 'un", Tom Baynes, admiral of story-tellers before the mast. Today one must seize the hackneyed excuse for critical house-cleaning: 1930 is the centenary of Brown's birth. But the work of T. E. B. is no attic stuff, no vesture to be folded up. His spirit is a veritable though innocent *diable boiteux*, too buoyant ever to have deserved a corking. To release it even to oneself is to catch in the face a tonic breath, an escape of sun and air.

Perhaps the trouble has been that Brown wrote too much. All too few, indeed, are his personal poems, published in the last volume, *Old John and other Poems*, of which the best seem to have been written between 1868 and 1878. Scanty, too, and undeservedly neglected in files of the Henley periodicals are his essays, recollections of Oxford's days and dons and of literary excitements, on themes as variant as Pusey and Izaak Walton, written with what he called in another "a fine eupeptic slovenliness", sprinkled with beautiful bits of that uncommon thing, beautiful English prose. But the main body of his work, with the long monologues in Anglo-Manx, though delightful in a frank old-fashioned way, is even appallingly extensive.

T. E. B. too has been but moderately committed to the perpetual care of biography. But his letters, collected in 1903, though clipped by many an editorial reserve and limited by the omission of many years, are a capital substitute. They show with a sort of triumphant survival the man as his friends knew him—a man essentially manly, and simply good; rugged as the child of Manx rigor and poverty should be, strong and stern in control, sustained in reticence but warm at heart from elemental fires, headlong and complete in generosities, unfailing in friendship, magnificent in mimicry, stoical in quietude, splendid in wit.

They reveal, besides, the curiously duplex character of his life and work. They show him obviously as he wished to be, the master-Manxman, scholar-poet of the folk. They show him with more reticence but more profoundly, the "born solitary", the contemplative in the midst of fellowship and business, whose utterance was the religious lyric, remote in its nature and appeal from the homely warmth of the dialect yarnings.

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They suggest, too, all the facts that we need to know. They recall the birth in the cottage parsonage near Douglas of the young one among the many children of a poor clergyman, to a life "care-pricked" yet "healed with balm of sea and rock". They note the struggle for education at last ended, the distinguished degree which made the young servitor of Christ Church actually first among Oxford's youth, the fellowship at Oriel in Oriel's greatest day. They touch lightly on the farewell to academic vegetarianism, the choice of marriage and the common tug. They complain with humorous frankness at the schoolmaster's career, that pill accepted though never quite digested, even through the thirty years as second master of Clifton. A stanza of 1869 records the always slumbering protest:

I'm here at Clifton, grinding at the mill
My feet for thrice nine barren years have trod;
But there are rocks and waves at Scarlett still,
And gorse runs riot in Glen Chass—thank God!

For the most part the letters tell of the last four years, the return to the Isle of Man, which was resolved upon almost by accident at a visit's end, the flight of the homing-bird back to the "blaeberries on old Barrule" and the "silence still on Carragh". They reveal an always closer dedication to what the writer called "islandhood".

"Absolutely and really I could live here forever with a Horace," he writes. The quotation suggests the special compound of learning and power of unlearning which was one secret of Brown's difference from others. There was understanding of things elementary and bare, so necessary that he felt himself elsewhere a starveling. "I did very well in the Isle of Man," he writes after one visit; "had two solitary walks, drank deep draughts of I don't know how to describe it—that social brewage which is got nowhere else." But the Horace was necessary, almost a symbol of his intellectual life fed on the honeydews of scholarship, symbol besides of the nice preparation which he believed necessary for whoso would undertake to interpret the rough. So he trained himself to be a dialect-poet on a fare of Virgil and Euripides, with an almost Chinese dedication to the rites of memory, shedding tears (of another sort from the usual schoolboy's) at thought of what the *Ars Poetica* had been to him. His classical faith he confessed with a mingling of his own paradox and a sort of Athanasian flair: "Greek is a baptism into a faith, a cult, not more irrational than other faiths and cults, the baptism of a regeneration which releases from I know not what original sin; and if a man does not see that, he is a fool, and such a fool that I shouldn't wonder if he gravely asked me to explain what I mean by original sin in such connection". "I know whom I have believed," he says elsewhere of Virgil. It is a late and nice word of classicism, this sea-growth by the Manx strand. But not Euripides nor Horace nor Virgil is stellified in Brown's heaven. Each is brought in turn to be most winningly "the genius of the shore", friendly as any Manxman of them all.

The letters are foaming with expressiveness. A gallant phrase is always to Brown like a good drink or a whiff of mountain air. "After all," he says somewhere, "I don't mind confessing that I have many times constructed a whole system of little more than bosh to enshrine a 'locution'. Faith, one might do worse." But Brown is not among those to whom bosh should ever be forgiven, so fresh is his power over speech, so self-driven his thought. Here is prose at once ingenuous and precious. And the word prose meant in Brown's vocabulary no second best. "It is true," he wrote to a friend, "that at your time of life the poetic mustum might well have been raked off and the pure and limpid prose be beautifully on tap, ready for drinking."

One could perhaps get a considerable raking of mustum from Brown's own verse, but never from his letters. Each is, in a way, like his characteristic poem, a dramatic mono-

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logue, setting in like a breeze, not assumed like a garment, through which drift keen ardors, wit fair and familiar, eruditions sun-warmed and floating free. One remembers another Thomas Browne, liked and once plundered by this namesake—in the savors and flavors, the privacies of invention, especially in the liberty taken with the Latin word, though Sir Thomas Browne would never have dreamed of such impudence. But the verbal audacities are niceties of abandon which the classics could never resent, being so sweetly entreated. We understand the old charge of self-consciousness brought against T. E. B. But it is like the play of his little mountain brook just beginning its infant wiles in the water still spring-cold:

> . . . O brave leap! Brave leap!
> 'Twas excellently done. . . .
> Have at the biggest stone—O, nobly meant!
> I swear it was magnificent! . . .

So do the cherubs show off, it is to be hoped, in the kingdom of heaven.

The same gusto is everywhere for all things sound. Most delicately it waited on a flower. It was always ready for the mountain climb, provided it could be twenty miles long and arduous all the way. It was ready for all reverences: for master spirits or at least manly spirits as he discerned them in the world of letters, for just men made lately perfect, or for living and familiar friends:

> "Croak—croak—croak!
> Do you like your own folk?"
> "Yes!" says the little Jackdaw.

It was ready till the last day for every whiff of air that came from the Isle of Man.

The Isle of Man, "far withdrawn into the golden west", became by habit and deliberation his sufficient life,

> A little island in the sea,
> A body for my needs, . . .

His affection could perceive its poverty: "You can hardly believe", he writes in an early letter, "how absolutely barren and desolate the island appears to me, coming from Gloucestershire". But once made, the confession is never repeated. All his "dreaming" is charged with the vision of "island forms", with the search of austere winds, "the cliff, the beach, the tide, the rock", "where salt winds whistle through the bent", with the roughness of sea-holly under foot, with the sad "cluck of water in the tangles", with the mist of open spaces, and at dusk,

> . . . that strange drift-light, dim, forlorn,
> Of the sun's wreck and clashing surges born.

Brown's best days were on sunny upland slopes in the regions of cleanest air, where the heather "rushes", where the gorse bloom "bubbles". The step always springs upward—not indeed to walk in sentimental mood with morning on the silver horns, but maybe to sit naked on a rock below the waterfall in the eyes of silly sheep, alone as a god, or in sheer vitality to pose upon a watershed "as upon a horse",—up with "the blessed mosses, and the "sweet golden gurgle", of the little singing streams "that have been saying the same things since dry land appeared". In the grim whimsy of "Dartmoor" the celestial surgeon comments on a vivisection of the poet's brain:

> Another lancet—thanks!
> That's Manx,—
> Yes, the delicate, pale, sea-green
> Passing into ultra-marine—
> A little blurred—in fact
> This brain seems packed
> With sunsets.

With the years the exalted celebration of nature yielded to the deeper, half-conscious fellowship. More and more the doings of sophisticated man became an inconsiderable triviality in comparison with that largeness—"A whole bench of bishops throned on South Barrule! What would it add?"

Yet most deeply rooted in Brown was the sense of human tradition, the continuity of the generations. "One thing often touches me," he writes: "the deserted villages which are the result of emigration—the cold hearth,

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the bit of thorn where children have played, the elder-tree at the gable to keep away the fairies. And the vacant space, just so many feet of vacant air—the home, the place where the bed was, where babies have been born and women wept." His filial piety was deeply solemn, with an outspoken frankness which was certainly not due to the Saxon within him—for his father, the sainted "persoun of a toun", for the mother of borderer stock from whom he drew his strength and mountain love. Always the quality of race made for him the best romance. At a feast of Burns he became "fairly mad with seempathy": "Heaven only knows what crapula inherited from generations of toddy-drinking borderers takes possession of me".

Brown's family tree had but very "little Celtic root in the Isle of Man", though he liked to think of himself as wholly Manx. But he made the most of the Celt within him, a good deal hardened, as he felt, by Saxon qualifications. He used the thought, as it were, to warm his hands, though with no illusion about the errors to which the strain is liable. In his most glorious hours he is like another whom he describes as "dripping all over with Celtic rapture, like a dog just emerged from a pool and shaking himself". In quieter moments he dreams the Celtic dreams with deliberate choice. And of all imaginable bonds of kinship and race he makes religion: "The thought that troubled me was this—Who is to perpetuate the traditions? They must go with me. The whole business will be only a blank, not only tribal traditions but family. . . . The wind passeth over it and it is gone and the place thereof knoweth it no more. The new generation must build the fibre of its own and the old must vanish. I alone have to build a cairn of memories in my books".

II

His care, then, was only to be the poet of Manxland, to "hold the mirror up to his countrymen". The *Fo'c's'le Yarns* are dedicated to this aim. They are "soaked in dialect", "colloquial", in the language, we are to believe, of the forecastle, or of the mine and beach, "with the thundering verbs, the outrageous adjectives one hears at the Harbour", with vocabulary further enlarged, we naturally suppose, by the invention of that most expressive Manxman, Brown himself. The poems, long and bulky, are meant "to unlock the Island heart", to "secure an anchor for the Celtic soul", if ever future men of the isle start "haply longing for their fathers". Brown labored indefatigably, and largely in vain, for a Manx revival, lecturing on island themes, hoarding every scrap of the apparently unremarkable Manx verse, welcoming any attempts such as Hall Caine's, to make Man a serious basis for novel or poem, concocting Island songs with no vanity about their value. For the Island's sake he poured out his best years, refusing toward the end to accept the archdeanery of the place, resolved to end a loyal Manx life in free fellowship and literary service of the Manx folk. For the Island's sake he mourned, though quietly, in his last year, "the drying up of the spring".

His personal ambition was sunk in wistful hope for the awakening of the Island genius. In a letter of good nonsense he once conceived the Manx poet yet to be, in whose glory he was content to be eclipsed. "It is odd," he says of his own poems, "but, do you know, I have a perfectly serene confidence in their future. How it will come about I am unprepared to say, nor does it matter. A great poet is yet to be, a Manx poet, transcending all our smaller doin's. A child perhaps yet unborn will do it. He will be called Kewish, Shimin, Quayle, Cottier—all right. He will stumble across my old ditties. He will love them. . . . The fire will be kindled. . . . Through Kewish I shall find utterance, through Quayle, through Cottier. . . . And I shall be perfectly satisfied. Kewish shall shed the tear of sympathetic divination. Leave it to Kewish. A gran' chap, Kewish."

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The verses of Manxland are all stories. These made the "protoplasm enough for poetry" which he always found on every return to the island. "I believe," he wrote on a holiday from Clifton, "that if I were living here permanently, I should get a whole cart-load of this lore. . . . I had no idea that such a number of silk-worms were here, spinning their quaint cocoons night and day. . . . The brains are always going. I almost heard them at it. I didn't sleep all through the nights." Brown's editors tell us, indeed, that the actual body of his poems was all composed during the Clifton years before he made the Island his final home. But the gleanings from the fleeting visits make a considerable pack. The themes seem much the same on the Isle of Man as elsewhere: "courtesy, humanity, friendliness, hardiness, love, friendship, cowardice, murder, hate, virtue and sin". There have been no new stories since King Arthur's day.

The best tales, in themselves a wide representation of Manx life, are the *Fo'c's'le Yarns,* told by Quartermaster Tom Baynes to a forecastle audience held and, in a sort, compelled, by the masterly spinning—of scenes as they used to be back home at the Harbour, in the fishing-boats, among the miners, on the remote farms in pockets of the hills, in the villages packed with closer life. The local events are all here: the fairing and its turbulence, the harvest home, the storm, the shipwreck, the drowning, the gallant rescue, the visitation of cholera — still terrible in memory—the coming of the "Ranters" and the excitements of religious conversion, the discovery of a Chartist refugee in "hidling", and, sad and frequent theme, the betrayal of woman, the return of the prostitute to be sternly deported by the inexorable judgment of the folk, rivalries between town and mine, between shore and upland, and a perpetual courting expressively called "sooreying".

The *Yarns* have a lively population of real Manx folk, loved with the enthusiasm of the letters, but known at their worst as well as their best, just as we know the neighbors. They are for the most part inexpressive, with one idea, and that a simple one, at a time, tormented by no subtleties, but bewildered often by themselves, driven hard by impulses beyond their ken. They are compound of passions low-moving on the level of the beast or exalted in purity. They are children boisterous and rough, for whom, none the less, a burst of poetry or beauty may happen any time. They are casting nets in the sea, delving deep in the soil, stupendous in drunkenness, gripped by tradition including the longest tradition of dirt. Housewives gossip in doorways or make stupid malice in parlors; children are thick underfoot; real hearts alive tramp through the muddy streets. And above all is Tom Baynes.

Tom Baynes, the special creation of T. E. B., is surely not made to be forgotten. He is a master story-teller, a "dreamer" in his own sense of the word:

> A dream it's like—and it's strange to a man,
> But I'm allis seein' things that's gane.

He is the Manx character of Brown's day, as he conceives it at its simple best, in its uncouthness and wisdom—Manx with genius added. In his utterance the word comes always heightened, colloquialized, dramatized. Take a bit of transformation on a familiar theme:

> But I'm allis thinkin' of the fellow once—
> In the Bible, you know—that said to his brother,
> "Pull out the moat!" "Indeed!" says the other;
> "Is it moats?" he says; "and talkin' to me!
> Come out o' that with that beam!" says he.

The tales are bulky; for the teller likes each one and is minded to make the most of his opportunity. They are long not only because spun fine but because they wander both unconsciously and with resolution, pausing without excuse to elaborate a picture, a flavor, a memory, a sorrow. The audience waits, impatient, while Tom falls into reverie, uniting in his vision and ours the forecastle audience and the far-away recollections of youth and

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home. But most in these lapses Tom shows himself poet in his gift of "knawin' ".

"Noticin' lek!" "Semperthisin'!" "Takin' a terr'ble interer'!" Such is the way of Tom Baynes. He is alive—to the feeling of things, to the "spring of an innocent foot", to the wind that "blows straight from the farm", to the milk "tearin' into the can", to the mystery and motion of the world's processes:

Like the moon and the stars God only touched,
Once long ago and away they scutched;
And now He never minds them a bit,
But they keep goin' on, for they're used of it.

His best "knawin' " is for the devious ways of human nature, its evasions, and subterfuges, more revealing than its central acts. He reads the lines of experience on the worn faces, as in the moment when he tells his mother that he is off to sea:

And I looked in her face, and the shape and
strent,
And the very face itself had went
All into one like a sudden thaw,
Slished and slushed, or the way you've saw
The water bubblin' and swirlin' around
The place where a strong man have gone down.

He has an aphoristic sense which a Meredith might respect: the wisdom of the folk plus a shrewdness of his own:

Pardonin'? Murderers? What do they want?
God can afford it, but man can't.

. . . when a bone
Is picked, it's better to lave it alone.

And never no egg wasn't hatched with bilin'.

"This is love!" she said, "and the nice it would
be
If it wasn' for the misery!"

Brown identified himself with Tom Baynes as he wrote. "I never stopped for a moment to think what Tom Baynes should be like. He simply *is* I." Brown's assertion should not be taken literally. Tom Baynes is but a rough diamond. He defends the accepted doctrines of Christianity by the direct method of throwing a budding atheist off the coach. His special pride is a fine art of spitting which he teaches his initiates. But the resemblance is evident and amusing. One remembers the report that mimicry in conversation was almost a second nature to Brown. He must have put on the sailor's cap and tattoo without noticing. One discerns the Tom Baynes manner even in a late essay on Sir Philip Sidney. And perhaps Tom Baynes is actually responsible for our recent loss of memory about him.

Brown is far too easy-going in his ways, though his laxity is no more than the "fine, eupeptic slovenliness" which he has liked in another. Tom Baynes, a "comf'ble" creature, can hardly be too irregular to please us. But the verses of Brown reveal to the caviller many such lapses in places far less appropriate than the *Yarns*. It is often hard to descry the line which runs between whimsy and absurdity, and Brown does not always note on which side he is stepping. Is a daring phrase a bit of splendor or a lack of self-criticism? We are not surprised to hear Brown say that the verses sometimes went on in his sleep. Such ease is always unlucky. Poets, and present-day poets perhaps more than Brown, can always profit by the wisdom of the old Protestant divine: "If the work be a good work it is work. Ye can make but work of it". Brown himself knew his weakness. In a late year he wrote with acumen and humility to a younger man of letters on their common admiration for the finish and shapeliness of a newly discovered French novel: "And to think that it should seem so casual. . . . I quite see how natural it is for certain minds to energize in that way, but then I can't. And that is settled forever, and probably was settled some fifty years ago".

Tom Baynes besides may have increased the poet's unashamed penchant for pathos, already considerable enough. Our poet seems here most old-fashioned, like the young Mrs. Gaskell or the young Dickens at any age. But it is quite harmless, this pathos of a buoyant and singing spirit. Brown was frank-

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ly conscious of his taste for tears and jested about it without apology. "Perhaps you think me a ninny, but whoever wrote 'The Pleasures of Melancholy' just hit my notion, if he did it well." And the *Fo'c's'le Yarns* are washed in a flood of pitifulness. Brown knew, none better, the value of artistic reticence, "the noble avenues of reserve through which a strong spirit withdraws itself", on guard over its depths. To achieve the pathos of "Betsy Lee" or of "Mater Dolorosa" is to express real life and magnanimity. It is nevertheless to miss the rigor which is "to enter in at the strait gate". Yet whoso has spent some hours with Tom Baynes in the forecastle will leave with thanks, and with no churlish word of criticism.

III

In the poetry not Anglo-Manx but Brown's own, lyrical, speculative, descriptive, religious, there is perhaps a finer value and a more than minor originality, not only in the free-ranging verse in days before freedoms of verse got themselves talked about much. Resemblances to better known poets are evident enough, as is natural where reading and sympathy went wide. Among the English poets Wordsworth was his declared choice, though he suggests more often the anguished or the buoyant Clough in the animal verve of some nature verses and in the gallant pitting of his spirit against the universal secret. Browning, who admired T. E. B., must have found good not only the skilful monologue and the speculation, like in boldness though not in power, to his own outrageosities, but also the bold carving of fresh galleries through the hard quarries of speech—though it never happened to Brown to disembowel a volcano or to stir a subterranean fire. Still the quality of Brown remains his own.

"Noticin' ", "takin' an interer' ", "realizin' " —these are still Brown's gifts in his delicate personal verses. We have seen his vision for the lines of experience on hard Manx faces. It is as keen for other faces, as in the late "Roman Women" where pass in full-blooded procession the noble mate for Brutus, the strong mother of young Romans, and their sisters dissolute and voluptuous, under the hard Italian light. For all things under the air the "knawin' " is also a heightening—for the summer smell of the foxgloves, those

> . . . innumerous-celled revolvers [which]
> Shoot honey-tongued quintessence of July—

for "My Garden", his best known poem, where, as is well remembered, God walks when the day is cool, or it may be for a mouldy schooner, late "rat-riddled, slime-slobbered", become under the benediction of the west a spirit bound for morning.

Brown's reflective verse is extemporaneous in form like the *Yarns*. He has left a considerable body of elegiac poetry, notably in memory of his son Braddon, who died at the age of seven. Of these "Aber Stations" is remarkable, a series of seven sorrows through which the mourning spirit, fleeing from April jubilee and platitudinarian condolence, climbs to the keen air of the upper slopes to the waterfall of memory, to find relief and acquiescence even with the "transcendent rush of Spring". It has a persistence of minor memories, a grit of the concrete, a play of the stricken fancy with the desolate symbolism of loss, which is acquaintance with grief. Often here, as in the smaller lyrics on the same theme, there is a poignancy like the best of Coventry Patmore. And otherwhere in the midst of many too facile verses comes a check in the poetry of pain which gives for the instant the force of epigram.

The mind of Brown stirs itself healthily about the mysteries. With Wordsworth he harkens to nature. But he is a pupil of quick question, with the readiness to attack the unanswering which has been native to keen minds since Adam, becoming conscious of himself on creation day, felt of his legs and arms and then inquired of air and tree and sky whence he came and why. It is to Brown's credit that he does not always im-

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agine the same reply. The poems of pain and inquiry, such as the arresting "Dartmoor", are charged often with reproach. The cry against the apathy of nature is fresh again:

> . . . the ages fall
> Helpless from out the rigour of thine arms.

And the creative divinity within the cloud, "on Chaos drifting", wasteful, blind, seems alien, uncertain, dumb, compared to the temporal activity of man, "shaping the definite self", "sifting the elements", "with determined letter and sweet articulate voice". But at the end Brown withdraws from the claims of man, his little meanings, distinct though they be, his "agues of desire", futile as "zigzag lightnings scrabbled on a cloud". The speculative poems enter the cosmic patience, rather than insisting on revolt. Brown's real clue to experience is not a philosophy but a religion.

The early letters of the boy to his mother embarrass the reader of today by frank and astounding piety. With the years Brown shared, as poems and letters show, the doubts and wrestles of his decade. One reads a greater humility, an economy of assertion. But the constant note is of freedom from interior hubbub. We may understand enough from a letter written in his last year, in which he cites the witness of saints and their experience as a warrant of faith: "They have seen the King in his beauty. Give them credit for honesty, for intelligence, for sympathy with human wants, for absolute fairness, for burning love. . . . With tottering steps I have accompanied them. But that was years ago. Now I don't want to totter but to walk steadily. Therefore I say unhesitatingly, I believe. I have encouraged the glimpses. . . . Must I always be breaking stones upon the road to Heaven, examining and re-examining every rung of Jacob's ladder? Well, no. I have other things to do".

One gift of the mystic, at least, is that very power of interior loneliness which Brown's friends record. "Few men are capable of such retirement," he wrote of himself. "It is an awfully large order," he said in 1890, "but we really need three lives; the life of pedagogic activity, the social life nicely arranged and kept in hand and never regarded as serious, and the intellectual and spiritual life." Thus to this neighbor and prince of conviviality our social life is but accident, like the chance propinquity of horses which stand in adjacent stalls and sometimes hear each other whinny and munch. And in the religious verses the isolation of self becomes of course a contemplative isolation, the solitude of the private soul. So in the little poem, "Salve", the spiritual cave-dweller receives with gladness and welcome the traveller who brings with him faggots for a fire and leaves in the morning with blessing: "They have a cheerful warmth —those ashes of the stone". Yet the traveller must pass on: "His morning is not thine".

Brown could rid himself of the leaden garment of self-consciousness, that "idiot cheer of self", which is his reading of our human limitation. The escape is not solely a religious experience, apparently not managed by penitential purgings. It comes in some degree from sheer comfortableness. In an unsanctified poem of 1868, "The Lily Pool", he envies a big-eyed cow, lazily enjoying the summer warmth and the cool water, watching the mirror below, quite unconscious of her reflection:

> So may I ever look upon the lily-pool,
> Nor ever in the slightest care
> Why I am there;
> Why upon land and sea
> Is ever stamped the inevitable me; . . .

And Brown's power as spiritual poet is that he sometimes could overlook the universal image of the self. Self-conscious in delightful ways, he nevertheless forgot sometimes the luggage of desire. The complete saint would hardly bother to be a poet, it is true. Yet Walter Pater was right in his statement that the saint and the poet have more in common than either has with the child of this world. Brown's mystical lyric is therefore a free

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thing, a play of delightful notions. Sometimes it recalls the daring of Father Tabb. But the natural suggestion is of the seventeenth century and its religious verse with the improvident hide-and-seek of "divine wit". We note with amusement that Brown enjoyed Quarles. But the "pious fancies" of Quarles have rather the elasticity of good rubber than the liberty of air where Brown meets his casual sunbeams.

His dedicated poems, few but best, have therefore their right word in "Disguises". The lyrics are, as it were, emblems of a Musician apt to play heavenly music if the virginals of the soul are kept ready—of an unseen Fellowship which will keep tryst if anybody else will intend to keep it—of a shell lying on the sand which the Sea's capacity might brim to the full if it were but sufficiently empty of its own little contents. This last is the theme of Brown's lyric "Indwelling", complete in symbolism, firm in shape:

If thou couldst empty all thyself of self,
Like to a shell dishabited,
Then might He find thee on the ocean shelf
And say, "This is not dead,"—
And fill thee with Himself instead.
But thou art all replete with very *thou,*
And hast such shrewd activity,
That, when He comes, He says:—"This is enow
Unto itself—'Twere better let it be.
It is so small and full, there is no room for
Me."

It is the ring of a distant glad cry in each religious lyric that calls us back when we are turning away with the reflection that this is very much the sort of thing we have heard before. It recalls the animal gusto of the youthful letters, but it is more. Sometimes it is imperturbable and mature:

If youth be thine,
Spare not to drink its wine;
If youth be fled,
Hold up
The golden cup—
God's grapes are always red.

Sometimes it has the artless reach of that fine cry, "Land Ho!", wistful but with recurring assurance like a far horn of promise:

You cannot see the land, my land,
You cannot see, and yet the land is there.
My land, my land, through murky air—
I did not say 'twas close at hand—

It is a land to be descried, one might say, borrowing a phrase, only by true "innocence of vision".

The survival of that innocence in adult work active with speculation, warm with experience, is Brown's final singularity. It is the utterance of a simplicity not to be found for seeking. Who shall find simplicity? Easier far to enter the mother's womb and be born again. But Brown did, without doubt, drift sometimes into its light in his long and wandering solitudes among the heights. Hence in gleams of illumination we lose with him for a second the memory of mortal strains and ineffectual passes. There come small rushes of flight when we seem to hear the flutter of little wings, as if we had run inadvertently through an invisible cloud of the Holy Innocents escaped from a Sienese painting and out for a holiday. From that company perhaps comes the glad, almost inaudible, cry from far away. Is there around the seat of the Holy Ghost an invisible game of the cherubic multitude and did somebody tag the goal? Hardly that. The lyric is not quite a heavenly song; the call is still forward. But in the analogy of Brown, the journey of the soul is not more often through a pathless sea than through a perpetual green pasture. Brown has said that "children are before him". If one follows his lead and learns by habit of his lore of symbol, one stands, as it were, on the edge of a shining meadow and looks under the sun. There ahead a child is planting a little flag, just a step beyond the limit of safe footing. He turns to smile with a gesture of gay bravado. "Come on. I dare you to it," he seems to say.

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ALEC WAUGH

by Evelyn Waugh

I DID NOT really begin to know Alec until after the war. He is five years my senior and five years is a very long time when it represents the gulf between nursery and public school. For the first fifteen or sixteen years of my life, he was a very Olympian being indeed, whose arrivals at our house in Hampstead were always the occasion of parties and theatre-going; his ties, socks, hair lotions and walking-sticks seemed to me the highest goal of elegance I might one day attain. Indeed it was more as a man of the world and athlete than as a writer that he figured in my youthful imagination. It was not that he did not write. My father used to read us Shakespeare and poetry, and Alec wrote sonnets and blank-verse dramas; he wrote a short story, of which I still retain a copy, called "The Melbourne Derby"; he wrote a long Swinburnian ode to Queen Esther. But it was as an athlete that his triumphs were most spaciously celebrated at home; his record fifteen colors, house colors, first eleven colors, his captaincy of his house were all events observed with present-giving and general cheerfulness.

At Sherborne he was editor of the school magazine and winner of the Prize Poem; he got into the Sixth Form at the unusually early age of sixteen, but the war prevented him from competing for further academic honors. He joined up at seventeen in the Inns of Court O.T.C.; from there he transferred to the Royal Military College at Sandhurst and was gazetted as record lieutenant to the Dorset Regiment. It was while he was in training in England that he wrote *The Loom of Youth*, his first novel. It was an astonishing achievement. It is simply the story of a boy's life at school from the day he arrived until the day he left; there have been many such books since written by all sorts of boys and girls about all sorts of schools. Alec's seems to me to stand quite apart from all these. It is mainly autobiographical. He had no educational axe to grind. He did not want to "show up" anything or point a moral or retaliate upon personal enemies, although all these motives were attributed to him in one quarter or another. His interest was simply in the development of his hero's character and in the dramatic coherence of the incidents of his life. It was a book which shocked a number of people because he omitted nothing from what seemed essential to his theme, even if it was in conflict with the accepted tradition of English public schools. He wrote at great speed, at odd moments early in the morning and late at night, snatched from the brief leisure of his military training. The manuscript was written in note books, on the back of maps, on odd scraps of Y.M.C.A. note-paper. It was published in the summer of 1917, just when he was going out to France for the first time, and was an immediate success, attracting by its treatment the respect of responsible critics and, by its theme, enormous popular interest. Edition after edition

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was quickly exhausted. Alec came out of the army at the end of the war to find himself already famous before his twenty-first birthday. Since then he has written six novels, two books of short stories, a book of poems, two books of essays, and two books—*The Prisoners of Mainz* and *Myself When Young*—which defy classification but are, I suppose, best described as autobiography.

I think that my favorite of his novels is still *The Loom of Youth*. He has advanced enormously since then in maturity of outlook and polish of style, but his first book has a peculiar fragrance of youth and enthusiasm about it. His later work, like that of all sincere artists, inevitably reflects the passage of time and the twelve years since the war have been difficult and deadening ones. *Cardcastle*, which, oddly enough, was least successful commercially, comes next in my admiration, and after that *Three Score and Ten*. Of his non-fiction works I think that his last book, *The Coloured Countries* [recently published here as *Hot Countries*] comes far and away ahead. If one had to attribute any ancestry to Alec's peculiarly individual style, one would first think of Mr. George Moore, but of Mr. Moore brought up to date, divorced from Paris of the nineties and Dublin of the early nineteen-hundreds and plunged into the insecure world of post-war London; of George Moore disillusioned even of his last inviolable stronghold of belief in the Sanctity of Art. Nothing could be better suited to this style of writing than the compilation of a leisurely, discursive and acutely critical travel book, such as Alec has produced in *The Coloured Countries*. Moreover this book is very much more than the mere daily journal of the novelist on a holiday. It contains in the chapters about Haiti what I think we may predict will be the germ of Alec's future development. It seems to me that he is growing out of novel writing; his narrative poems, his story-teller's instinct for significant detail, his ability to sort out tangled chains of motive, to assess probabilities, to render incidents dramatic and memorable, seem to me all to fit him for the rôle of historian. Steps are being taken to induce him to undertake a history of the West Indies, and I feel confident that if he decides to give up his time and powers to the task, we shall all be indebted to him for a really valuable work.

Perhaps I ought to add some personal sketch of him. It is difficult for a brother. I know him both so well and so little. We are on terms of cordial friendship but we meet each other most infrequently, I suppose, of all our friends. Neither of us knows the other's movements. One day I receive a postcard from him bearing a Cambodian or West African postmark, telling me succinctly of some astonishing encounter; the next day my telephone will ring and I shall hear "Mr. Waugh's compliments to Mr. Waugh and will he lunch with him at the Ritz on Friday?"

I look up the day in my engagement book. "Mr. Waugh's compliments to Mr. Waugh; he is very sorry he is engaged on Friday. Will Mr. Waugh lunch with him at Boulestin's on Monday?"

"Mr. Waugh leaves for Berlin by air on Sunday morning."

And the next I hear will be a postcard from New York or New Zealand. You may meet him anywhere at any time and in any sort of company. Alec is in no kind of set. He has more friends and acquaintances than anyone I know, but none of them know each other. At most houses when you are invited to dine, you have some idea whom you will meet. At Alec's flat you may meet a Rajah or a best-selling novelist or an ultra modern painter or a colonial governor or some one he met playing cricket in Burma or a man who lent him a tennis racquet in the club at Port Said. You may meet him standing in the crowd at a baseball match or at a café on the Promenade des Anglais or at a first night in London or in a gambling den in Saigon. He will always be the same; short, sturdy, very smartly dressed, usually carrying some slight-

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ly incongruous burden, a parcel of provisions, a baize cricket bag, or a cinema-camera. He will greet you with the utmost amiability; establish connections with six of your friends and relations; stand you a cocktail and then—disappear. He is always "just going"; his luggage is invariably packed. You will arrange to meet him at the station to see him off; but you will miss him. He will have taken an aeroplane or been offered a lift in a car or he will discover some new line of ship in which he has never travelled. You will meet him three years later at the other side of the globe and he will recognize you and continue the conversation imperturbably as though he was unaware of the interruption.

A DIRGE FOR DUST

by Jean Batchelor

With tears and torches we resign to earth
Man become dust. The ground that gave him birth,
With fragile grasses and with transient flowers,
Receives him now, after his term of hours,
Into a quiet and unbroken sleep.
Why weep for him who nevermore shall weep,
Robbed now of sorrow, losing life that brings
Its share of sorrow to all living things?

Why weep that man is dust, when no bells toll
Dirges for dust that must assume a soul—
Poor idle dust that shall become again,
Sun-scorched, wind-woven, wrought upon by rain,
After its idle and unthinking years,
A creature briefly breathing, fed on fears,
Harried by hopes and by its loves cast down,
The ceaseless builder of a crumbling town.

Weep for unfeeling dust that must resume
Such frail felicities as can consume
Man's heart, his vain mortality to cheat—
Must suffer winter's cold and summer's heat,
The exquisite inconstancy of spring,
Autumn's farewell, the false and flashing wing
Of youth that promises and flies away
Leaving a dull moon and diminished day.

Not death is dreadful, not the tranquil tomb—
Life is the desperate and lovely doom!

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ROADSIDE MEETINGS OF A LITERARY NOMAD

VIII. LONDON AND ITS TITANS—G.B.S.—KIPLING—ZANGWILL AND DOYLE

by Hamlin Garland

CHICAGO, gay with flags and filled with cheering crowds, was celebrating the close of the war with Spain when I returned to it in October. As I listened to the marching bands and heard the comment of the crowd, I was aware of my complete detachment from this war folly. It was only a little war, as Roosevelt had said, and it had come and gone while I was in the wilderness concerned with trails, rocks and rivers.

On meeting Lorado Taft and Henry Fuller I found them almost as unaffected by the war as I was. Stephen Crane, Richard Harding Davis and many others of my New York friends had won distinction as war correspondents. Some of them had taken on grandeur by their service but Crane, it appeared, had made a failure of it. He was not a reporter. He wrote of his own reactions to events and not of the events themselves.

Shortly after my return Joaquin Miller sought me out. He too had taken part in the Klondike rush. He had carried a pack over the Chilkoot Pass and rafted down to Dawson, where he had shared a miner's cabin. He had come East under contract to lecture on the vaudeville stage. "Garland," he said earnestly, "you must look after me while I'm in Chicago. I can take care of myself in the mountains or in the woods. I'm at home on the back of a cayuse, but this town scares me. Any minute a trolley car is liable to ramp around a corner and jump on me."

"All right," I replied. "I'll look after you every afternoon. How long are you going to stay?"

"Two weeks or more. My durn contract calls for two addresses each day."

He had changed greatly in seven years. With his flowing beard and his long hair—now very gray—he suggested Tolstoy, but his dress was picturesquely Western. He wore a broad-brimmed hat, a frock coat, dark trousers and cowboy-boots; and his overcoat, a superb wolfskin garment which came nearly to his ankles, carried a double row of oblong yellow buttons each about the size of my thumb. Upon closer examination these turned out to be nuggets of gold.

"See here!" I said. "You're not going about Chicago with these nuggets on your coat?"

"Oh yes," he replied and, thrusting his hand into his pocket, displayed a handful of smaller nuggets. "No danger. No one will think they are real."

The reader must remember that Joaquin was not only dramatist and poet, he was the son of a typical overland pioneer, and a lifelong adventurer. In him the wearing of a broad hat, jack-boots and long hair was not affectation. They were all habits of dress persisting from his days on the border. His reliance upon me touched me and amused me. He followed me with the meekness of a country lad, waiting for me to lead him across the street and trusting me to locate the

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restaurant in which we were to meet two of his old-time friends.

He told me of them. "P. B. Weare," he said, "has done more to destroy the wild fowl and wild animals of the Middle-West than any other man I know. For years he was a merchant in fur and game. John J. Healey is the man who put the first steamboat on the Yukon. He helped make the country. He is the Kit Carson of the Northwest."

We made a remarkable group at the table. Healey was a small, quiet, graceful man of sixty with wide and varied experiences in the wilderness, while Weare, a slightly younger man was a bald, alert, keen-eyed business man. That he possessed a vein of poetry was evident, for almost immediately he said, "My house is in the middle of a piece of virgin prairie. I don't allow anyone to touch a weed or flower on it. If you come out you'll find all the blooms and grasses natural to the season".

The restaurant was crowded and as all my companions were low-voiced it was not easy for me to follow their talk; but I permitted no word to escape me. It was like reliving the scenes of an epic. Healey and Joaquin had faced the cold winds, barren peaks and tumultuous rivers of Alaska. They had been hungry, weary to numbness and many times in danger of beast and savage. They knew every phase of mountain life, yet here they sat quite unnoticed in a commonplace Chicago restaurant. Something tremendously moving went with their low unhurried reminiscences.

At the close of our meal, Healey, who was a man of substance, asked the waiter for the bill but Joaquin interposed, "No, no, John, this is on me".

"Nothing of the kind," retorted Healey as he rose and took from his trousers-pocket a roll of bills.

Joaquin also rose and reaching back under the tail of his long coat said in level deadly monotone, "Sit down, or I'll kill you—right where you stand!"

Healey laughed and dropped back into his chair. "All right, Joaquin. It's your ante. Go ahead."

It was a fine piece of acting, but it was also a glimpse of the old Indian fighter, the man who had ridden Pony Express in the mountains of Idaho some forty years before. It amused me greatly, as I suppose Joaquin intended it to do.

LXV

In accordance with my promise, I met him every day and guided him about the city which deeply interested him. He had not seen Chicago or any of the large cities for many years. I introduced him to Taft, Clarkson and others of my artist friends. Taft, attracted by the poet's noble head, asked me to gain his consent to sit for a portrait bust. Miller readily consented.

I suggested that he should allow Clarkson to do a painting of him at the same time. "All right," he said pleasantly. "Whatever the gentle Garland commands shall be done."

All this will surprise those of my readers who have imagined an entirely different Joaquin Miller. He soon won the respect of Taft and Clarkson. I sat near him during most of each sitting and he talked on many subjects with such precision and quiet dignity that we were all delighted with him, and he often made us laugh with his quaint humor which was all the more amusing coming from such a Tolstoyan face and figure.

After the second sitting he glanced at Clarkson's sketch and remarked quizzically, "I see you're digging the old man out of the shadow".

He talked of his life in London—of Whistler, Rossetti and Swinburne. He told the famous story of his call on Swinburne with a well known writer who claimed to be a friend of Swinburne.

They sent up their names and the irascible old poet said, "Send the American poet up and tell Blank to go to hell!"

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"Whistler was the light of London when I was there," he said, and later he added, "He was used to sheriffs, there was always one around his studio. . . . There is only one thing more vulgar than boasting of your high birth and that is boasting of your low birth. I was born in Indiana. My father's people were Kentuckians of Scotch descent, but my mother was of a Pennsylvania-German family. Father was a good deal of a Quaker; he never fired a gun in his life. He was a school-teacher and people called him 'Squire'. I was about eight when he decided to go to the coast over the Oregon Trail. This was in 1851. . . . Grant was stationed near our home in Oregon. He was a good clean man. I went fishing with him once. He remembered this long after when I met him at a big reception to a visiting nobleman. He and the duke were standing to receive a crowd of people. As I came up he said, 'I remember you. You put worms on my hook in Oregon'.

"I do all my writing in bed," Miller said in answer to some question by Clarkson. "I don't want 'the literary stoop'. I leave that to the Yankees. Time has squat heavily on my shoulders and bent 'em a little—but I don't acknowledge even that."

These two weeks' association with him increased my liking and my admiration. We talked incessantly of redmen, the plains, the Oregon Trail, gold mining, Walker of Nicaragua, and while we talked we both forgot the smoky tumultuous city. There was something tremendous in the contrasts and oppositions he suggested. He typified our Far-Western literary life with all its interwoven glories, grandeurs and crudities. He was at once mystic and miner, sage and mountaineer. He had no vanity about his work. He knew that it was a hodge-podge; and when I said, "Joaquin, your poems need editing, ruthless blue-pencilling", he smiled and said, "All right, Youth, go ahead and do it".

He was never bitter or unkind in any comment and my only dislike of him was in his over-gallant attitude toward women, with whom he was incurably Byronic in gesture. That softness was unworthy of him. In most ways he was of large stature, with an epic outdoor quality.

I never saw him again, but last year I went by motor up the long road to "The Heights" to pay tribute to his memory. I hardly knew the place. A forest had sprung up where his orchards had been. The pipes of his fountain were rusted and broken. His tiny cabin—tinier than I had remembered it—was closed, but in his mother's cabin a caretaker showed me a few dusty, faded, pathetic reminders of him, a kind of scrap-heap which I know he would have destroyed if he could. On a stone post outside the door, a bronze tablet testifies to the regard in which California holds this most illustrious of her poets.

LXVI

It was while Joaquin Miller was still lecturing in the vicinity of Chicago, that Israel Zangwill (whom we had all come to know through his *Children of the Ghetto* and his essays in the *Chap Book*), came to town and set everybody talking of him and his books. No recent visitor had so deeply stirred our literary circles. His wit, his brilliant comment and his humor quite won the reporters and paragraphers, and long accounts of him filled the daily press. Naturally the Jews of the city took intense pride in his success.

I called for him one afternoon at the home of some friends on the South Side, and piloted him down to the Fine Arts Building—a distinguished progress for me, by reason of the fact that Israel was almost as noticeable as Joaquin but in a totally different way. Dozens of people recognized him as we walked down the boulevard but he, with his brain swimming in a sea of amused speculation, appeared unconscious of the sensation he was creating. He was filled with wonder of the city. "This place was a happy hunting ground only half a century ago! Extraordinary!"

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His cushion of thick, black, curly hair was topped by a minute rag of a hat which fantastically exposed his large and very plain face. He was one of the ugliest men I had ever seen, but his ugliness was relieved by pleasant brown eyes, and by an expression of kindliness and alert good humor. He walked with irregular and uncertain action, bumping occasionally into me and mostly out of step. In truth he never even got into rhythm with me but as he stumbled along he kept up a stream of self-derisive and witty comment which compensated for his physical awkwardness. He personified London as Joaquin represented the Sierras. He talked precisely like his essays in the *Chap Book* and I had nothing to do but to laugh, and to keep him from being run down by carriages.

In due course we reached the Press Club, where he met several local writers, among them Opie Read and Will Payne. He was especially pleased with Opie, who represented something typically American, the spirit of Kentucky and Arkansas.

At five I took him to the "Little Room", where he met Taft and Fuller and others of our artists. All were impressed with his detailed knowledge of artistic London and Paris, and his deep acquaintance with modern literature. He seemed to have touched every phase of painting, drama and fiction.

For several days I saw much of him. In the midst of adulators, intellectual beggars and persistent journalists he found me (so he said) helpful. At his insistence I attended one dinner where I was the only Gentile in the midst of several hundred of his Jewish admirers. I also aided him to meet certain other leading citizens who interested him, and Lorado Taft made a rapid sketch of him, a remarkably good likeness. His front face had something spiritual and fine in it, but his profile was as ugly as Savonarola's—old, immensely, sorrowfully old!

When about to leave for New York he said, "You must come to London. You have many friends over there now. They'll find you as American as Joaquin Miller, though in a different way".

This brought up the question of English clothes and English customs. "You forget that I am just an old trailer. I have no high hat and no evening suit."

"Neither has Bernard Shaw—but you must have both. As soon as you arrive I'll introduce you to my tailor and in a few days you'll be prepared to go anywhere."

I said something about the swallow-tailed coat being undemocratic.

"You are all wrong," he said. "It is the most democratic of garments. When you are encased in one you will be indistinguishable from an earl or a waiter."

"It isn't so much the swallow-tailed coat but the tall hat and all the accessories," I argued; "and besides it's expensive."

"You're wrong again. One suit will last ten years, and once you get one in general conventional form, you can wear any kind of studs or ties you like."

I stood firm because I felt myself weakening. On several notable occasions I had found myself shut out from something very much worth while merely because of my lack of suitable clothes, and to go to London as Joaquin had done with sombrero and jack-boots would be to imitate an earlier audacity. "I guess the time has come to abandon my mid-Western prejudices against 'dress suits'," I said to Fuller and Taft. "My frontier prejudices must give way."

Zangwill went away to New York, where he expected to stay for several months, and I promised to look him up on my arrival.

LXVII

The question of going to England deeply engaged my thoughts. I had never given it serious consideration before, chiefly for the reason that I had never been able to set aside the money for it, but also because I dreaded the sea. I knew I should suffer on the ship and that I should disembark a sad

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wreck of myself; nevertheless, I continued to plan for it.

On reaching New York in December, I laid the project before my mentor, Mr. Howells. "Shall I go to England, and if I do, shall I conform in matters of dress?" I asked anxiously. "Burroughs says he didn't. He says he wore a soft hat and the same sack suit that he wore at home."

"You *can* do that on the street. The tall hat is prevalent but not universal, but if you go out to dinner, you must conform. Burroughs did not go into society at all. You should do so."

I explained that as a Social Democrat and individualist I had argued against the tyranny of the dress suit. "It is not easy to climb down from my high position."

He smiled in full understanding. "Why don't you buy your evening clothes in London and when you return plead the inexorability of English social customs. This will break your fall."

I seized upon his suggestion. "By George! I'll do it. You've shown me the way. I'll take this opportunity to tumble off my perch."

I mention this resolution not for its personal interest but because it was typical of a widespread social change in the West, due in part to the World's Fair, with its many dinners and receptions, and also to the passing of the frontier customs. It is safe to say that I represented hundreds of thousands of pioneer sons who secretly longed to assume, now and again, the garments of the gentleman, "just for a change". Comical as it seemed to my Eastern friends, it was vastly significant as a sign of social transformation. The judge and the presiding elder were losing power as arbiters of customs and costumes.

While I was still in New York, Kipling, with his wife and children, returned to the city, after four or five years' residence in England, and took rooms at a small hotel nearly opposite Carnegie Hall. The papers made much of his arrival and when I went to call upon him, I found the hotel swarming with visitors. He met me with delightfully boyish elation. His reception by the city had amazed him. "They come in shoals!" he said, referring to his callers and his expression was that of a man astonished as well as pleased by this unexpected evidence of interest. Five years had raised him to a lofty place in popular favor. The papers were full of friendly interest and comment, and all the publishers were eager to secure something from him.

He spoke of Riley and asked to be remembered to him. He referred to Frank Doubleday, his publisher, with satisfaction, and said that his sales were increasing. In short, he was very happy in the change which a few years had brought about. A few days later I saw him again in company with Zangwill, a very curious and revealing interview, for the Boer War came up and Zangwill, who deprecated it, pleaded for the rights of the small peoples. This roused the Imperialist in Kipling, who argued with fiery zeal for the dominance of the white race. "Ours is the job of civilizing these savage and backward tribes," he said in effect. "Nothing is gained by coddling weak and primitive men. The law of survival applies to races as to species of animals. It is pure sentimental bosh to say that Africa belongs to a lot of naked, ignorant blacks. It belongs to the race that can make the best use of it."

At the end of an eloquent defence of the English as the chosen civilizers of the world, Zangwill remarked with gentle, reproachful, yet humorous surprise, "Why, you're almost Hebraic".

And so indeed he was. Zangwill, the Jew, was the disciple of "the Prince of Peace", while Kipling, the Christian, was the man of Gideon and battle. I thought him wrong then; I'm not so sure of it now. There are so many filthy, pitiless, unsanitary, half-formed savage races in the world, so many millions have been slaughtered, and so many

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millions must continue to struggle for mere existence!

Zangwill had never met Howells and it was a pleasure for me to bring them together. They were much nearer in thought and feeling than Kipling and Zangwill had been, and I listened to their talk with delight. It amused me to see them studying each other with casual but keen scrutiny. As we came away Zangwill said, "How delightful he was. How modest: I have never known such humility in a great man".

One warm day, a day almost spring-like in temperature, I met Kipling and his wife on Twenty-fifth Street. After greeting me he said, "We're out in search of Doubleday's office", and I offered to guide him to the door. I observed that he was wearing a light-weight overcoat whereas the reporters had made much of the sumptuous fur coat in which he had landed. I remembered this a few days later when the morning papers announced that he had been stricken with pneumonia.

For nearly two weeks his life was in danger and the whole nation waited in anxiety. Bulletins were issued as if for a king or general, and everyone rejoiced when the word was given out, "He will live".

LXVIII

In truth I realized that now was the time for me to make my pilgrimage to the home of my ancestors. I was approaching my thirty-ninth birthday and was, presumably, at my best as a writer. I was free to go. My father and mother were living in comfort and I had no other ties.

I thought of the long line of pilgrim sons who had sought, each in his day, the literary shrines of England. Cooper, Irving, Hawthorne, Emerson, Lowell, Burroughs, James and Harte all had been drawn to their ancestral homes. Without assuming any place in the long procession, I acknowledged the same longing to see, to hear, to know.

In my judgment the outstanding English writers at this time were Thomas Hardy, Henry James, James Barrie, Bernard Shaw and Rudyard Kipling, with Zangwill, the chief Jewish novelist, a growing figure. It may be said that I was prejudiced in favor of some of these men because I knew them, and that is probably true. Mostly my interests were with the realists, and not with Conan Doyle, Anthony Hope, Rider Haggard and other writers concerned with the romantic side of life. To be merely an entertainer was less admirable to my mind than to be an interpreter. Hardy exemplified one concept, Conan Doyle another. As Emerson in his visit had sought philosophers, preachers and poets, so I naturally looked forward to meeting novelists and dramatists. I had little desire to go to France or Germany, and Russia held no allurement.

In preparation for this trip, I returned to my home in Wisconsin, a very humble home indeed, quite as unimposing as the cottage which Hawthorne left when he sailed for Liverpool as newly appointed consul. I had no delusions of grandeur. I had written eight or ten volumes of prose and verse, but they were a mixed lot and some of them were negligible. Two or three of the best had been published in London and one of them had been widely circulated in abbreviated form. I was better known than Hawthorne was when he landed, but that is not saying much.

It was a very serious matter to set aside a thousand dollars for such a trip and I would not have felt justified in doing so had I not carried with me an idea for a story which might turn out to be an entertaining vehicle for my impressions.

The idea, while not new, was far less hackneyed then than it is now. I began by depicting a Colorado prospector's alarm when his partner in Chicago commanded him to go to London and sell some stock in their undeveloped Uncompagre Mine. Jim Mattison was not a cowboy, but a trailer,

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a mountaineer gold-seeker, who had spent fifteen years roaming through the Rocky Mountains. Endowing him with many of my own experiences and filling his talk with the words and ideas of the hardy explorers I had known, I planned to express some part of my own reactions as a trailer. I called this story *The Hustler.*

With several of the opening chapters written, I sailed one lovely morning in May. . . . . We will let those dots represent the week which followed. It is enough to say that I landed in Liverpool quite the wreck I had prognosticated.

LXIX

In 1899, "G.B.S." was not so much the signature of the dramatist as of the newspaper critic. His brilliant essays in the *Saturday Review*, backed up by speeches and letters, made him at once a terror and an admiration. He had written *Arms and the Man*, which had been performed in America by Richard Mansfield, and *Candida*, of which Anna Morgan's School in Chicago had given a very creditable performance. Those of us who had followed his polemic career through the columns of Herbert Stone's *Chap Book* had come to believe that Shaw was one of the most brilliant and vital of contemporary English authors.

My desire to see him was so keen that I immediately notified him of my arrival. Hardly had I settled to my routine in my hotel on the Strand when a letter came from him inviting me to spend the week-end at his home in Hindhead.

As this was to be my first introduction to country life, I was in some perplexity concerning my wearing apparel. True, I now possessed a swallow-tail and a tall hat, but having been told that Shaw never wore such garments I was still perplexed. However, I decided to take evening dress along on the chance that Mrs. Shaw might have other guests in conventional garb. I also owned a handsome Prince Albert for afternoon wear, and a noble broad-brimmed hat, so that from a mid-West point of view, I was well clothed, that is to say I was in appearance a blend of presiding elder and Congressman, a bearded and powerful individual of thirty-nine, whose full face suggested General Grant.

I mention these details in order that the reader may anticipate the shock which Shaw was about to sustain and measure his tolerance and good humor. In addition to all these peculiarities, I carried a winter overcoat and wore winter underclothing, for the penetrating chill of the ocean winds was deadly. I was in constant fear of pneumonia. Four months of the cold rain of Alaska had not subdued me, but May in London had almost destroyed my confidence in the human machine.

Behold me, therefore, alighting from the train at Haslemere, a lovely little village in Surrey, with a long black overcoat on my arm and a bag in my hand, anxiously looking for the carriage which Shaw had said would meet me.

The only vehicle in sight was a very smart cart drawn by a well groomed brown cob and driven by a man in brown livery. As I made my way toward this very conventional turn-out, the driver touched his hat and said, "For Mr. Shaw, sir?"

He was a very dignified person and was plainly surprised by my costume, and especially by the offhand gesture with which I tossed my bag into the cart. No doubt he was accustomed to bringing strange guests to Shaw but I was a new kind of crank altogether. My hat was especially "odd".

I inferred something of his amazement and as we set off up the road which climbed in winding course toward the north, I said with hearty Western neighborliness, "You drive a fine horse".

With a start of astonishment he drew away from me. My democratic camaraderie was painfully disturbing. However I persisted

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and at last drew from him the information that Hindhead was a colony of literary folk and that Conan Doyle, Grant Allen and Mrs. Huxley were neighbors of the Shaws. "We shall soon pass Dr. Doyle's house on the left, sir," he volunteered.

As we rose I perceived that the group of summer homes occupied a long treeless ridge and that Doyle's house was "at the head of a draw", as we say in the Rocky Mountains. Turning to the left along the summit of the hogback we came to a large frame house standing at the edge of the hill and overlooking the valley to the south. The entire landscape was sombre, barren and strange.

"It is called the Black Moor, sir, and on the hill to the east there used to be a gibbet where they hung people," the coachman explained.

As we turned in at the gate I saw a man sitting under an umbrella on the sunny side of a stone wall, busily writing on a pad. This was Bernard Shaw.

Hearing the sound of wheels he rose and came toward me, limping as he walked. He was tall, bearded, and dressed in a knickerbocker bicycling suit whose arm-pits were reinforced with patches of leather, and as he greeted me I was amazed to find that his eyes were a sunny blue and his hair and beard blond, not to say "reddish" in color, not at all as some of his "Satanic" photographs had made them out to be. In fact he impressed me as a lank, sandy-complexioned Scot and not as an Irishman at all. His voice and accent reminded me of my Scotch-Irish neighbors in Wisconsin.

He explained his limp and the patches of leather at his arm-pits by saying, "I fell from my bicycle a few weeks ago, and broke a bone in my ankle".

On entering the house, Mrs. Shaw, a handsome and kindly hostess, accepted me in the friendliest spirit, notwithstanding the Wild-Western effect of my dress. Perhaps she was already accustomed to her husband's quaint American friends. "Don't dress," she said; "we are alone."

The house was spacious and the chamber to which I was led was very large and overlooked a valley.

LXX

Shaw came to dinner in his bicycle suit and while Mrs. Shaw and I ate heartily of a generous roast, Shaw picked around among chopped apples, beets and beans. I learned with surprise that he was not only a strict vegetarian but that he drank neither wine nor beer. He did not smoke nor swear nor talk slang, and he was never coarse.

He was a tremendous talker, that I at once perceived, but I was glad to listen, chuckling with delight at his sharp thrusts at accepted absurdities, many of which I had never before questioned. "People say I see everything through distorting glasses," he said, "but the opposite is the fact. I see things as they really are. Other people see them as they once were or as they think they are. They are the ones who see things upside down, not I."

He glowed with humor. There was nothing cynical about him. Brilliantly wise and witty, he was in no sense acrid or malicious. Profoundly hostile to all shams, all pretensions, he spoke of American lynchings, graft and cheap politics with amazing knowledge, and when I admitted the truth of all these and said, "But in spite of all these defects, we are getting along pretty well", he burst out, "You should be doing much more than 'pretty well'—you should be setting an example to the world. You should not be accepting and perpetuating the blunders and social crimes of Europe. You had a chance to discard the feudal land system of England and failed of your opportunity".

He was right in this. He talked of Henry George and said, "It was from him that I acquired my first impulse to reform". He told me of his work in the Fabian Society. "I met Mrs. Shaw there," he added. He

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spoke of the surrounding country as a famous old barren. "It was at one time a retreat for thieves and murderers. A gibbet used to stand on that high point to the east."

I had never listened to such a talker. His voice was beautiful and his brilliance astounding. For four hours he went on as we sat before his fire, and yet, at the end, I could recall only here and there a line of marvellous monologue. It was like watching a series of rockets flame by overhead. After I went to my room at midnight, I was moved to set down some part of it but this is all I could record: "If Shaw can talk like that on chopped apples and shredded carrots what would he do on a beefsteak?"

One thing I recalled next morning and made note of. "Shaw's attitude toward America is irritating because it is true. Why *should* we take on the conventions and age-old injustices of England? We had a chance to escape the wrongs and restrictions of feudalism, why didn't we do it? Simply because our forefathers had feudalistic grooves in their brains. They were feudal in their desire to own land and control labor."

At breakfast Shaw ate fruits and toast and drank milk or possibly tea—I cannot be sure of this—while I had a generous meal of eggs and bacon.

Immediately after breakfast, Shaw being busy at his writing, I wandered out on the heath, studying the plants and the birds which I saw there. Small brown larks, something like our crested larks, were numerous, filling the air with a sweet twittering song, but I gave more thought to the flora. The gorse appeared to be the primeval verdure and on my return I asked Shaw whether these hills had ever been plowed.

"No, the gorse was there when Caesar came. These common lands have never been tilled or changed in any way."

"What are those little twittering birds out in the heather? They seem a kind of lark."

Shaw looked at me quizzically and smiled. "Why, man! those are skylarks".

"Skylarks! Not Shelley's skylarks? Those tiny twittering birds can't be the poet's rapturous heavenly singers?"

"The very same," he replied with a laugh in his eyes and then, with the easy insolence of an Irishman criticizing something English, he added, "The skylark is a vastly overrated bird".

It was a lovely morning and as the dining room was full of sunlight Shaw brought out his camera and took a snapshot of me at the breakfast table, and one in the garden while I was illustrating the manner in which the farmers of the Middle-West carry their heavy overcoats half on and half off their shoulders.

As he had done all the talking the night before, I was now to have my inning, for when he learned that I knew something about "Red Indians" he started me talking of them. I was in the midst of the story of Rising Wolf, a Cheyenne miracle worker, when he stopped me. "Grant Allen should hear that! He is keen on redmen. Get your hat and coat and follow me".

Notwithstanding his lame foot he led the way briskly across the common to a lay neighbor, a quaint old lawyer who had also interested himself in American Indians. To him Shaw smilingly exhibited me as if I were a favorite nephew just returned from Canada. Having introduced me and in a way explained me, he stood aside and commanded me to talk. This may seem incredible to those who think of Shaw as an egotist, but he took pleasure, apparently, in seeing me win the old man's interest and respect.

This action, which amused me at the time, became very valuable afterwards because of its revelation of Shaw's kindly interest. When others spoke of his "destructive bitterness", his "intellectual ruthlessness", I thought of him as he was that day. His reputation as a cynic counted for nothing as I saw him in genial intercourse with his neighbors. It was evident that they not only respected him but liked him as well.

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We then went to call on Grant Allen, whose evolutionary books I valued. Allen, who met me cordially, was not at all the typical Englishman, in manner or in accent. In truth he was almost American in speech, a thin, active man, keen-eyed and quick-spoken. After we had talked for some time on Indians he asked me if I were going to the continent. When I said that I was he presented me with a copy of a guide-book he had written and gave me some valuable advice concerning routes and scenes in Italy and France.

LXXI

While we were still at Allen's, Conan Doyle came in and invited us all to Sunday midday dinner.

Doyle, whom I had met several times in New York and Chicago, was a near neighbor—Shaw's direct opposite in all ways. He was typically British in form and spirit; a big, broad-shouldered, genial man, fond of hunting and sports of all kinds. So far as I know, Shaw took no interest in any game—his only recreation was riding the bicycle—and he abhorred shooting; nevertheless, he and Doyle were friendly though not intellectually congenial.

Doyle and I met on the common ground of athletics. We both loved games in the open air and the mountain trail. He had a tennis court and was a member of the Authors' Cricket Team, and at luncheon that afternoon we fell to discussing the relative merits of cricket and baseball. Naturally I stood up for our national game, as the most scientific and perfect ball game in the world; Doyle quite as loyally upheld cricket.

To prove my case for the scientific accuracy of baseball, I spoke of the curving of the ball in the air and the high degree of skill which our pitchers had developed in delivering it to the batsman. Doyle confessed that he had never seen the ball curve in the air and that he had a doubt concerning it. "We use what is called 'the break' of the ball from the turf, in cricket, but I cannot see how a ball can alter its course while in the air."

"If I had a ball I would show you that it can be done," I replied confidently. "I am still able to pitch several of the curves."

"I don't suppose there is a baseball in all England," replied Doyle. "When are you going back to the city?"

"Tomorrow forenoon."

"Suppose we go in together," he said, and named the train he usually took. "I want you to dine with me tomorrow night," he added, "and if you like we will attend a boxing match at the Athletic Club afterwards. There's an American boxer who is to meet one of our distinguished middle weights. It may turn out to be a real fight."

On the way home from Doyle's, Shaw became delightfully human, as well as humorous, and we had another memorable evening before his fire. The serious side of his nature came out as we discussed the work of the Fabian Society. "You must know Sidney Webb," he said. "He and his wife are doing a noble work."

On Wednesday afternoon Doyle met me again, and took me to the Crystal Palace Park, where I saw a typical English crowd and a typical English game. It was all slow business for me. The game did not interest me as much as the spectators.

Shortly after we had taken our seats, Barrie came poking along through the crowd, entirely alone, and looking like any one of ten thousand other men, in a bowler hat. No one recognized him but Doyle and myself, and we were too far away to call to him. Sombrely, slowly, he climbed to one of the highest seats, and there came to perch like a lonesome crow, peering dreamily out over the field. Strange, silent, imaginative Scot!

Doyle pointed out the most famous of the players, and was greatly pleased that Grace, the great champion, was at bat. To me, however, cricket was a very monotonous game,

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and when they all stopped for tea I excused myself and went back to my hotel.

Zangwill took charge of me on Thursday, and with him I saw the salon of the Independent Artists' Association, a protesting group of younger men who regarded the Academy as "old hat" or at best merely correct or pretty. I felt quite at home in this atmosphere. It was another division into prophets and crumbling idols—youth announcing its contempt for age.

Zangwill went about with his rag of a hat in his hand, greeting many of the artists and critics. Among others to whom he introduced me was Henry Harland, whom Howells always called my "rhyme" and for whom he had a genuine regard. Harland was a little of Zangwill's type, dark, lively of humor and highly urban in sympathies and training. He at once invited me to dinner and his wife cordially seconded his invitation. "I want to hear about Howells and my other New York friends," he said.

Some of his books were known to me and I admired his deft pen. I looked forward to that dinner with especial pleasure, for the weather continued foggy and chill. I was cold all the time, indoors and out, and was on the verge of admitted homesickness when Robert Barr, the Canadian novelist, came into my hotel one afternoon, like a breeze from the Rocky Mountains. He lightened my sky by cursing the English climate in good open-air style: "It should be spring but it isn't". In the midst of our talk of Canada, a small soft-footed man came stealing down the hall like a ghost of Shakespeare. Barr started up. "Hello! There is Hall Caine. Come over here, Caine, I want you to know my American neighbor, Hamlin Garland."

Caine greeted me with mincing precision in a tone ludicrously flat when contrasted with Barr's good-natured roar. That the Manxman did not value me was evident, but as I didn't like his books, we were "horse and horse" as they say in the West. His personality surprised and amused me. He was so small, so gentle, to be the composer of the fierce and bloody volumes which bore his name. Doyle and Kipling and Shaw were like their books; but Caine was not in the least like *The Christian* or *The Manxman*. His speech was precise, his face ascetic and refined, his hands effeminate. We parted to meet no more during my stay, although we continued to live at the same hotel.

LXXII

With Zangwill for a guide I visited Arthur Pinero at his home in St. John's Wood. Pinero, who was one of the most successful dramatists of England, impressed me as a very frank, hearty and candid character. He was medium-sized, rather slender, and very bald over the entire front of his large head. Quick and precise of speech, he did not show his Jewish strain at all. In fact I should not have known him for a Jew had not Zangwill made it plain. It was this racial mixture, perhaps, which gave Pinero perspective on his English material, for he was not only prolific but victorious. It surprised me to hear him complain of "the commercial manager who considers art in the drama 'bloody rot' ", and when he added, "I came on the stage by way of a side-street", I did not understand the allusion. His house, which fronted on Hamilton Terrace, was finely but not extravagantly furnished, and he had every appearance of a solid success.

In lunching in the Temple with Albert Kinross, I met Mrs. Clairmont (George Edgerton), author of *Keynotes and Discords*. I had never read a word of her writing, but as a woman she interested me. She was amazingly frank in talking of herself and her work. Life had gone hard with her (according to her own statement) and she was extremely outspoken and bitter in admitting it. Nevertheless she gave me the impression of being essentially wholesome. She had her old father tottering about with her, and her care of him was fine and sincere.

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She was patient with him and tolerant of her absent husband, of whom she spoke with candor, as if he were a rowdy run-away boy. "The last time I heard of him," she calmly remarked, "he had shot a man in El Paso, Texas." She spoke of her lost beauty with sad candor, and left upon me the shadow of an approaching tragedy.

On the night of Henry Harland's dinner, I found my way to his apartment with some difficulty and was late. He greeted me cordially, however, and at once set about amusing me, very much as Riley was accustomed to do. My evident appreciation put him on intellectual tiptoes and he became strenuously entertaining. He talked quite uninterruptedly throughout dinner, giving forth a most delightful series of shockingly reactionary sentiments. He impressed me as a hybrid, neither American nor English, neither Jew nor Gentile. On this occasion he posed as a bitter conservative, opposed to all reforms and reformers and critical of American democracy, but I liked him and enjoyed his talk. I could not take his conservatism seriously, for all the women of his party drank and smoked, which was new and very "radical" to me.

He spent much time detailing the adroit methods by which he outwitted the various sheriffs who came to collect bills. He was especially funny in describing the method by which he engaged one constable in a political controversy in the drawing-room whilst the piano was being salvaged down the back stairs. I accepted all this as a part of the evening's designed entertainment, but I could see that it was not nearly so funny to Mrs. Harland. The play of being "just a jump ahead of the wolf", as Henry pleasantly described it, was not so pleasing to her.

One day I chanced upon Gilbert Parker swinging along Pall Mall with a graceful step and an air of happy possession. He had the look of a rich and popular man, and this in truth he was, for he had married a rich wife and was in Parliament. Notwithstanding the wide gulf between our fortunes, he greeted me as a fellow-trailer and as we chatted he recalled with humorous comment our first meeting at the *Arena* office in Boston. He gave me a most cordial invitation to call and walked on, leaving me with a better opinion of him than ever.

(*To be continued*)

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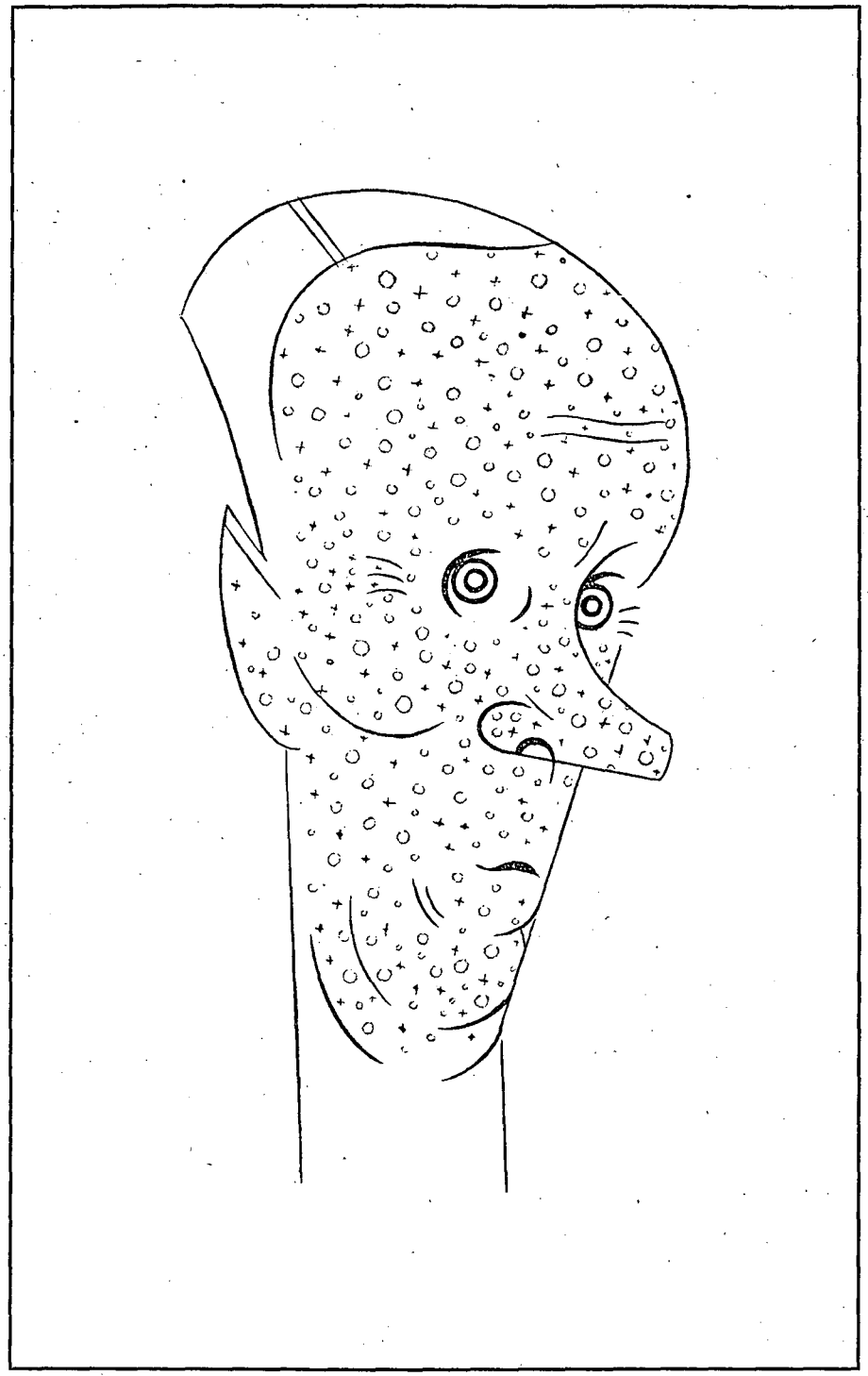

SINCLAIR LEWIS

Caricature by Eva Herrmann

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A LETTER FROM ABROAD

by Rebecca West

A survey of the Paris theatre—"The Criminals" by the mysterious Bruckner—Giraudoux's "Amphitryon" is chaff in the mouth—Do most French actresses look as if they had been born in the wings of a second-rate theatre?—Melodrama at the Pigalle done to death by crêpes suzettes—Why Bourdet's play might well be called "Le Monsieur aux camélias".

London, February.

For a human being to ignore the past achievements of humanity is to scuttle the ship. So uncertain is our foothold on the universe that we must remember as nearly as possible everything that has been learned lest we should find at some sinister moment that what we have forgotten is precisely that which alone could have saved us. Those ought not to be forgiven who, because they are Protestant or agnostic, turn their backs on the immense amount of knowledge acquired throughout the centuries by the Roman Catholic Church. It is a waste of Sinclair Lewis's energies when he writes *Elmer Gantry* without first considering that which the Church has debated on the subject of the unworthy priest in dealing with the Donatist heresy. It brings the argument no further forward when countless writers rediscover the Manichaean heresy and toy with the idea of an Emergent God issuing out of the dark womb of nature without seeing what was said on the subject (nothing much more to the point has been said since) before the sixth century.

It is, to turn to a matter that brings the philosophical in touch with the practical, no benefit to mankind at all if one faces the grave problems arising out of the existence of law with a sneer at the obvious hardships it sometimes causes and its errors of omission, and does not pause to consider what the law has done for society. The other day, at the Théâtre des Arts in Paris, I saw a play by Bruckner (the mysterious German or Austrian author whom nobody knows) called *The Criminals*. It has been running for two years in Berlin, I am told; and the heart is bowed down by the thought that for two years a community should have let itself listen to such jackassery on an important subject. Its thesis is that the law operates in such a way that all the innocent automatically go to jail and all the guilty automatically stay out of it.

Now, God knows that jail is a cruel place, and those that go there are to be prayed for rather than cursed; but really that is not all there is to the law. Did the audiences and critics that swallow this kind of thing never learn anything at school about Justinian and the foundation of civilized Europe which he laid by the codification of his law, doing as much as one man ever did to say that the jungle days were over and done with by his nice consideration of the laws regarding slavery and debt? Had they never been made to read the correspondence between Thibaut and Savigny (as exciting reading as an ado-

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lescent can have) in which the Romanticist follower of Rousseau cried out for a code based on the principles of Natural Law, and the hard-headed historian proved that laws grow organically out of social conditions, and that the legislator's task is to adapt legal tradition to the needs of the present? The salutary lesson of this last is that man makes his fate what it is. It exposes as invalid the philosophy behind this soppy humanitarian drama that showed us an apartment house with every room stuffed with the virtuous who were destined for jail and the vicious who were safe in their junketings, because of the malign intentions of a law which is conceived as an independent entity and not as a human product.

* * *

But in this play, like two masterpieces in a provincial museum full of rubbish, are the Pitoeffs. There trickles through it the story of a waiter, a miserable fellow, not even a restaurant waiter, just a café waiter, who is nevertheless a beauty man, one of those who can by a leer and a smack cause such dreams in the female as might more fitly be engendered if a god had smiled and caressed. He seduces a cook, for no other reason than that she happens to be in the room at the time. But he has another mistress, a plump and blowzy wench who runs a bar in this same house, who is very well suited to him. In a scene where she goes to her cupboard after an encounter with him and takes out her money bag there is a magnificent simplicity in her giving and his taking. One seems to look down an immensely long vista to a vanishing point where there is no more romanticism, no more of anything that can be expressed by an abstract noun: nothing but a thing in itself . . . what thing? The recognition of a limited aspect of reality, of the bare minimum that the organism can handle and go on living.

This recognition is the deliberate choice of minds that lack ambition, that want to wallow. There is no suggestion that the waiter and his wench have risen to the perception of the romantic. Rather are they children of a race that, wandering long on the feculent face of the earth, have become convinced of the futility of all aspiration and are content to squat. They belong, in fact, to the family of Leopold Bloom. But the cook belongs to that more foolish family that still will soar. She (played by Ludmilla Pitoeff) is a Gothic Madonna, oddly reminiscent at times of a certain dance by Angna Enters. When she finds out that her lover has been false to her with this trull she immediately strangles her. But not, it must be marked, out of jealousy: out of a philosophical fanaticism. She is enraged by the infidelity because it proves the parties involved to be the kind of person who is the natural enemy of her kind of person. She will not believe that love is what these others say it is, that life ought to be what they make it. With as noble an intention as any medieval Christian that martyred a Jew or any Mohammedan that lifts his hand against a Hindu, she kills the wench and lets the waiter be arrested for the crime. She bears witness against him. She will not lift her finger to save him when he is condemned to death. They have committed the sin against the Holy Ghost by rejecting reality, that is by destroying with their minds a part of God's creation; therefore they deserve to die. Their positions are described with diagrammatic clearness in the court scene. The waiter (played by Pitoeff) sits in the dark facing this occasion, as he and his kind have agreed that all occasions in life should be faced, with leers and shrugs. The cook, come to bear witness against him, stands straight and pure like a sculptured figure from Chartres or Vézelay. There is one superb moment when the judge enquires, as judges are apt to do, with an irrelevance that is near to naughtiness, into certain sexual aspects of the judged event. He drags into prominence some hypothetical matter regarding progeny. "No," says the cook. "He did not give me

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a child." The icy kind of hatred congeals her tones. "But perhaps that was his fault. He hasn't got any children." He had offended against the romantic theories of which her virginity was the symbol. It would, therefore, not surprise her if he had offended against the service of life of which her motherhood was the sacrament by being sterile.

But he does not take it as she meant it. *"Pas si bête!"* he guffaws, construing it as a neat thrust in the kind of verbal rough-and-tumble that is apt to succeed sexual engagements, and no harm done. His genial readiness to let her score her point, the good-fellowship with which he leans from the dock and tries to wheedle her back to him with a pet name, shows that in his infidelity there had been no ill will.

The course of justice goes on, and he is condemned to death. When he hears his sentence he makes a gesture that lives in my memory as the richest in imaginative implications that I have ever seen on the stage. For a minute he sits still. By his attitude he makes one see Death like a vast black cavern yawning in front of him. Suddenly he realizes his danger, recognizes that this cave is going to swallow him, and organizes the spry body that has carried so many trays and leaped upon so many ladies to meet this occasion also. He springs up, and lifts the stool he has been sitting on high in the air as if he were taking part in a café brawl. It is the argument of his soul that there is nothing in life as grave as Death now appears, that everything is no more and no less important than a café brawl. In this terrific movement which in a twinkling contracts the composition formed by the actor from something covering the whole stage, to the short vertical line of himself and the stool, that argument is stated with a force which imprints it on the air for the rest of the play, though he does not appear again. It abides there to give ironic point to the further unfolding of the cook's so different argument. Even as all the parts of a church, transept and nave, chapel and choir, tribune, ambulatory, crypt, are dominated by an altar and other references to the Atonement, so all the workings of her mind lead her back to ideas of guilt and sacrifice. She has done vengeance on those who rejected the Lord's creation, and that was right. But vengeance is the Lord's and must not be usurped. It is just, therefore, that she now punish herself. As she does so she becomes like one of those Madonnas who gather into their hearts a sheaf of swords, and thereby gives that argument as perfect and memorable a statement as the other. The Pitoeffs make all other theatrical performances seem thin and limited, on a poor level of being. This is because they bring to the art of acting what has been deemed incompatible with it, a rich store of general ideas.

* * *

For one reason or another, no evening I spent at the theatre in Paris was wasted. At the Comédie des Champs-Elysées there is *Amphitryon*, a flat-footed mythological comedy on the subject of Jupiter's love for Alcmena, the wife of Amphitryon, by Jean Giraudoux, who seems to me (and I fancy to most English and American playgoers) as boring as a dramatist as he is entertaining as a novelist. *Bella* struck me as being superbly contemporary. But *Amphitryon*, which is a series of snapshots of the crisis produced when Jupiter fell in love with a woman who, adoring her husband, had no use for a divine lover, and begged off, is as chaff in the mouth. Yet it is worth while going to it, because of the light thrown on esthetic problems by Valentine Tessier, the actress who plays Alcmena. Mlle Tessier is a glorious beauty. She has red-gold hair that seems to have learned how to grow from a sculptor; vast dark blue eyes, not insipid but like the sea; a mouth and chin that have something of the melting and mischievous conformation of Ellen Terry's; her hands flutter before her like doves while she rides space in the manner of the Winged Victory. Most French actresses

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have an air of having been born of a tired soubrette in the wings of the second-best theatre in Lyons and of having arrived at maturity by expedients that leave one reflecting that it takes all sorts of circumstances to make an orchid; but Mlle Tessier is plainly pellucid in all things, even to her origins. I have never understood what exactly Shakespeare meant when he used the phrase "inland-bred" to describe those that are lettered and have good manners, but I am certain that Mlle Tessier is "inland-bred". She is intelligent, too. Not a poor little point in the script but that she launched on the rich flood of her voice and gave its chance to make its voyage. Yet the ultimate tedium of her acting, its failure to put one coat of gilt on the gray evening, was unmitigated. Why was this? Because her performance was the equivalent in the theatre of a purely representational painting, of an old-fashioned naturalist novel. She gave an exact imitation of the behavior of a virtuous woman in the given circumstances. She did not analyze the experience which the story had created in her mind, and synthesize the results in a significant performance. One said, "This woman makes every single separate moment very agreeable. If I were a man I should long to marry her. She would spin out life into a sequence of delight". But there is required for art the very reverse of this motion, which shall contract all moments of a lifetime into three hours.

* * *

One had to go to the Théâtre Pigalle, because of its claims to being the most modern theatre in the world. So it is, and grandly. It has an entrance hall that makes a new kind of magnificence by having in the middle of it a wall of horizontal aluminium bars on which lights are trained, so that columns of brightness appear in various positions as one walks about; so that one is presented with a moving architectural composition, the main features of which are intangible. It has also an underground picture gallery, very seemly in its proportions, where they have art exhibitions of the first importance which are to be visited in the entr'actes.

This seems to me shocking. I detest all attempts—such as the playing of really good music between the acts—to seduce the esthetic attention into polygamous relations with more than one art at a time. The Théâtre Pigalle, however, is but one more illustration of the sad fact that on the stage the most elaborate envelopes contain the briefest and most jejune messages. They were playing a play by Lenormand called *Le Simoun* which was no worse and no better than *White Cargo*, being just that sad tale of heat and Imperialist responsibility laid in French Africa. Its chief interest was the hint it threw out that the arts of a country may be mutually destructive. The theme of the play is the sad fate of a French colonial administrator in Algeria who is living with a savage half-caste mistress, when his wife dies and his young daughter is sent out to him straight from a convent. He forms an incestuous passion for his daughter, who flies in horror from him to the arms of a sheikh, but is waylaid and murdered on the way by the half-caste mistress, who wants the sheikh for herself. All these are doubtless facts in the world of imagination, truly fathered there by Lenormand. Gémier is a great actor. He keeps his conviction at command. But the play found it hard to get its way; though it was not so utterly worsted as *The Shanghai Gesture* was when I saw it a night or two later. I strayed in because when I had seen it in New York it struck me as infinitely the best melodrama I had ever seen, and I wanted to see how Jane Marnac—a sleek actress who has that look of being a star simply because from her youth up she has always got the front seat wherever she might be—would handle a part that in the hands of Florence Reed had provoked a display of action as prodigious as an oil-gush but curiously behindhand in making any claim to preëminence. "I am able to do this because I have

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been acting for years," the actress seemed to be saying. "Lord! One learns a lot in those stock companies! I've put over dozens of bad plays in my time, and I suppose I shall put over dozens more before I'm done." But my curiosity as to the behavior in similar circumstances of contrasted types was, as it happened, not to be gratified. Jane Marnac was absent, and Madame Goddam was in the hands of an understudy, a dark, squarish, dutiful-looking woman of the type represented in Ruth Suckow's more poignant studies of repression. The poor lady's difficulties in adapting herself to the part for which she had been so strangely cast were increased by the circumstance that she had had no time to learn her words. From the second act most of her lines were given to her first by the prompter, then, as she was too flustered to take them, by other members of the cast, and lastly, with cruel hilarity, by the audience. But it was French cooking that gave the melodrama its death blow. In the last act the curtain rose and showed us the famous double staircase on the outside of the brothel, up and down which Florence Reed used to pursue Mary Duncan, catching her at last and stripping her half-naked just before she got her to the ground and killed her. That staircase, however, never came into play. When the time came for the pursuit, mother and daughter looked over their shoulders at it in an embarrassed manner. Mushroom omelettes, chicken done with truffles and cream, *crêpes suzettes*—the beneficent action of these on both parties would have prevented any chase they might have started up that staircase from ranking as a sporting event. Timber would have learned its limitations. They settled their differences on the level.

* * *

The hilarity of the audience at the plight of the unfortunate understudy was cruel. Yet the cruelty of the French I find not altogether unforgivable. I do not see how a nation could have proceeded with its business of creating a civilization in the face of constant agonizing interruptions imposed on it by its wars and the internal disorders caused by its political and administrative incompetence, unless it sheathed its nerves in callousness. That which enables man to endure has a special value in this community, whether its moral face is fair or not. Hence, at the Casino de Paris, the admired presence of Mistinguett. She is said to be sixty-four, and though the malice of man may have set the calculation a few years out, it is certainly true that in ten years or so she will be a grand old peasant woman. She looks as if decade after decade she had tackled her food with an iron digestion, and elbowed her way to the front whenever it was good to be there and stayed like a rock at the back when that was the better place. "Mere beauty is all very well," say the audience, "but this, this is an ideal."

The presentation of that ideal is not without its humors. Mistinguett has kept her beautiful legs, but her torso has thickened with age. This, since she brooks no competition from the female chorus, leads to some conventions unusual in a revue. There is in one scene a wind coming up from the boards which blows up the skirts of all parties concerned, and shows their legs to Mistinguett's honor and glory. But the other parts of the human body have to be kept covered, lest she be worsted. With a few exceptions the chorus remains swaddled to the chin in its winter woollies throughout the show. Noting this, one notes something else of the highest significance. Women used to have to supply the beauty and the sex appeal, men had to buy their place on the stage by special ability to act or dance or sing. But here is Mistinguett, slightly less aphrodisiac than the late Mr. Gladstone, flanked by Earle Leslie, in whose person she has glorified the American boy, and the Rocky twins, two Scandinavian lads who are *joli à croquer* and pout their wet little mouths at the audience while they dance as if they felt the need of being kissed. All the acrobatic dancing is done by young

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women anxious about their place in the sun. The female chorus works hard at the back of the stage, while the male chorus shakes its curls over the footlights in the full confidence of its youth and beauty. In fact, at the Théâtre Michodière they are playing *Le Sexe faible*.

* * *

It is by Bourdet, whose *La Prisonnière* I thought a dull, well-made play of the Pinero type. I found myself unable to believe that the author felt as he said he did about his theme. It seemed to me that as he had taken to writing rather later than most writers do, and had written but little, the state of composition induced a false solemnity in him, and that he was therefore neither so penetrating nor so cynical on the subject as he had it in him to be. He got freer in *Vient de Paraître*, that little comedy which Gerald Haxton and Somerset Maugham were said to have translated but which never seems to have struck London or New York; for there he showed himself as a fierce satirist with the power to dig deeply. There he exposed the vanity and callousness of the artist not merely to raise a laugh but to ask himself the question which many a saint has asked, "If the effect of increasing self-consciousness is to make man criticize out of existence so many of his impulses that previously resulted in benevolent action, had we not better stay vegetables?" Now he asks himself a question not so easy to formulate in words but hugely provocative of laughter.

M. Bourdet takes one of those French families that no longer worry about securing good marriages for their daughters—it is too difficult, and the girls are so energetic in business—but try to marry off their sons to heiresses from the United States or South America. He represents the family as living in a "Palace" plainly recognizable as the Ritz, and as having their affairs controlled by the head waiter, who is as plainly recognizable as M. Olivier, the head waiter of the Ritz. This character is beautifully played by Victor Boucher, an exquisite actor, compact as a button mushroom, yet infinitely expressive. He is superb in his melancholy conversation with the Russian countess who goes up and down the hotel corridors seeking for personable young men with all the allure of a shark. He is even more superb in his scenes with a South American gigolo, who is played with something like genius by a youngster called José Noguero. Because of his name it has been supposed that he is simply a South American behaving on the stage according to his natural bent; but in actual fact he is a Bordelais of Spanish origin, and this is a real impersonation. In any case there is more there than the assumption of an accent and a tight and doggish cut of tailoring. There is real imagination in the scene where the head waiter, dutifully anxious to oblige a young woman who is among the favored clients, flashes a diamond ring before him, and the gigolo's eyes, dark, oily, yet indubitably romantic, like the foul yet starlit waters of a tropical port, roll round and round as they follow the white brilliance. There is real imagination, too, in the dejected pose he huddles into after he has asked, "Why will nobody marry me? These American women always say they will marry me, and they never do", and the head waiter answers, "Ah, Monsieur Coulos, you have allowed them to discover that they can enjoy your favors without going to the trouble of marriage. When that is known about a young man there is very little hope for him. If I were you I would seek my fortunes in the provinces". Nothing could be funnier than his Magdalenish air at that moment. How quickly man's way of taking things has altered! The younger Dumas wrote Marguerite Gauthier's tragedy just eighty years ago; and now here is Paris laughing as it laughs at a supreme and true joke over what might be entitled "*Le Monsieur aux camélias*".

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FICTION

THE PARTY DRESS *by Joseph Hergesheimer* (KNOPF. $2.50)

MR. HERGESHEIMER'S latest is reminiscent of *Cytherea*. Both are outspoken studies of Love, capitalized, between folk in their forties, with a cocktail-drinking country club setting, brought to an end by a death. *Cytherea* told of a middle-aged business man rapt out of himself by love of a romantic married lady who, on their elopement to Cuba, succumbed to the climate and left him to regrets and old age. The fate of the man in *Cytherea* is the fate of the woman in *The Party Dress*. The latter novel tells the love of a beautiful matron for a romantic Cuban planter who flees from her back to Cuba to commit suicide on discovery that the lady's passion is more fleshly, less idealistic, than his. Cuba would seem to be Mr. Hergesheimer's emotional Eldorado, except that his characters find there not perpetual youth but the only ultimate he really believes in—death through love.

In this novel the island is also an ironical contrast to unromantic America, and is one element in a satirical treatment that, though subordinated to the love story, is certainly more entertaining. In earlier novels it was possible to feel the influence of Henry James toward psychological and grammatical involutions, and the influence of Joseph Conrad toward a slow building up of atmosphere and an exaltation of subtle heroism. In this book, particularly at the beginning, it is also possible, and rather surprising, to suspect the influence of Aldous Huxley or his like, working toward a disillusioned satire. Wilson Henry is a satirical caricature of the heavy business man. There is much shrewd analysis of the ways of middle-aged women, and racy transcription of their mutual unbosomings. Of the latter, consider, for example, Evelyn Delaney's reflections on her husband: "I like Ambrose, everyone knows I love him, but he does wear me ragged expecting me to be the queen of the highbinders in the bedroom and Little Eva, the beam from heaven, on the porch". And the monologues of Chalke Ewing, the Cuban idealist, satirizing, between draughts of rum, prohibition, love, women, and all American institutions, are as free and copious as any emanating from the languid lips of a London intellectual.

But the satire is never in the foreground, and before long the emotions of the mature lovers become as warm as the sultry summer weather in which they are described as blossoming. Nevertheless the curious will not be greatly rewarded should they read this novel merely for its passion. To one reader at least the interest, if not primarily engaged by satire, was always intellectual—the interest of the spectator, observing a subtle and convincing characterization of a woman. It is Nina Henry, the heroine, who really makes the book. Her party dress, the black Parisian creation which set all the men at her heels, is merely symbolical. It is her character which the author addresses himself, with modern frankness and cool objectivity, to presenting from within, as developed and expressed by an overwhelming passion. She is not a good nor a brilliant nor a heroic woman; except for unusual beauty she is obviously to be matched anywhere in prosperous American communities. I think it is to her author's credit that he makes her so wholly typical, and at the same time fascinates us by his presentation of her thoughts, her wayward impulses, her acts,

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as she progresses from idle flirtation with the town's rich Eligible Bachelor to sudden desire for the elusive Ewing—who represents to her all that is distinguished and different from her humdrum society—and finally to desperate loss and acceptance of inevitable old age.

If it is this observational interest which on review we find primary in the novel, it is because the love interest is in itself comparatively weak. And the reason for that is the failure of Chalke Ewing to come alive. He is seen externally, through Nina's limited vision; and he is motivated by principles difficult for ordinary mortals to appreciate. Why should any man commit suicide solely because he has succumbed to the seductions of a beautiful woman whom he loves, most of all a man of fifty with such effective reliefs for his feelings as an unlimited capacity for cigars, rum and cynical discourse? Chalke Ewing is not a living being but the author's excogitation of what he thinks is romantically distinguished. Viewed in retrospect he becomes quaintly amusing; he suggests what in general is a weakness of Mr. Hergesheimer when he deserts the firm ground of realism.

ALAN REYNOLDS THOMPSON

FLOOD *by Robert Neumann* (COVICI-FRIEDE. $3.00)

As A record of a disintegrating social order, as a picture of confusion, madness, terror and disease fallen upon a people that has suffered defeat in war and been stripped of all hope and faith, Robert Neumann's *Flood* is a profoundly interesting book.

It tells in the words of one of its characters the story of the Austrian lower middle class and proletariat just before and just after the World War. It tells a mad and frenetic tale of crime, debauchery, profiteering, poverty and spiritual chaos. But there is nothing artificial in the telling. Neumann plunges headlong into the insane dance of his people, and the result is a tumultuous, whirling story so overpowering in detail and so impressionistic in style that one reading cannot possibly encompass the vastness of its material.

The plot is lost repeatedly: things happen, it is true—everything happens, but in no ordered, form-conscious way. The thin autobiographical line weakly holds the torrent of events together. Characters hurl themselves in and out of the story roaring and screaming, or they sneak through it silent and diffident. The book seethes with life—rough, crude, boisterous life. It shies away from nothing: disgusting disease, foul perversions, blood-curdling obscenity and horrible crime.

One finds here a crazy, hysterical, raging life, life without goal or purpose. Hence the value of the book's realism. The Daumier-like description of the great business trial, the frightful scene in the dissecting rooms of the medical school, the picture of the fire at the end, are masterpieces of powerful writing.

But *Flood* is chaotic, in places even unintelligible. And what is more, it has about it a certain "too-muchness". The countless details, the rush of events, the numberless characters, the cryptic references to things darker and more terrible than those that are told, the epileptic mysticism of Reuben Feuerbach—strangest of all the figures in the tale—these make one feel the author himself is touched by the strange frenzy of his characters.

THE CRIME OF THE JUST *by André Chamson* (SCRIBNER'S. $2.00)

THIS is the story of life in the Cévennes Mountains of France, of a family which enjoyed among the peasants of the district the reputation for wisdom, an austere sense of justice and an inviolable integrity. It is the story of how this family grew proud of its reputation, and of how that pride caused a great sin to be committed. Ruin descends upon the whole line of Arnals: the family is broken, the leader is taken by the law.

M. Chamson has written in *The Crime of the Just* a short novel in the finest French

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tradition, where simplicity and clarity are prime virtues, and purpose something definite and unswerving.

The picture he paints of old Arnal, the Councillor, the reality of his character, the enviable dignity and worth of the family—all are done with the precision of pure literary art. Thereafter the incestuous union of the deaf-mute Clémence and her brother, and the child that must be disposed of become frightful situations against which the terrible pride of the Arnals rises. Here is a conception of sin in its traditional and truest sense, the sin of pride. And the disintegration of the family, first from within, then from without, evolves with an inevitability which is sure and full of a deep, human meaning.

The author's sense of justice and tragedy is sound beyond question. He has shown us a family essentially noble, and in their nobility he has shown an error. The tragedy is the result of that error, that human weakness.

The book reminds one of François Mauriac's short novels of the Landes. M. Chamson lacks Mauriac's sensitivity to psychic and emotional terror; but both have the same idea of human tragedy. Call it medieval, if you like, but it remains something that tears the soul from within, and not some force of circumstance operating upon an innocent victim.

KINDNESS IN A CORNER *by T. F. Powys* (VIKING. $2.50)

As everyone who has read *Mr. Weston's Good Wine* knows, T. F. Powys writes of English village life with diverting familiarity and singular charm. This latest book of his, though slighter in build than *Mr. Weston* and less elaborate in symbolism, is still typical of the author's concern with that atavistic, rural psychology called pagan, that reputed mysticism of the English peasant who is more akin to the ancient Celt than to the modern Briton.

The story here is almost a *fabliau*. A prurient-minded canon and his wife, believing the kind and scholarly rector of Tadnol to be consorting with a beautiful woman whom he keeps in his study cupboard, set about exposing the innocent and rather simple-natured Silas Dottery. In the course of his action, we become acquainted with scenes of the Dorset country and with persons possessed of all those "humours" that make characters real for English readers. The ludicrous predicament into which Canon Dibben lands himself because of his meddling is diverting, and establishes the similarity between this tale and those that Chaucer put in the mouths of his miller and his merchant.

Kindness in a Corner is in substance little more than a fable, but it contains Mr. Powys's easy, ironic, pleasantly mocking style; and although that style is not in itself enough, it does compensate somewhat for the general ineffectuality of a brief tale made into a novel.

ALAN BURTON CLARKE

TURN BACK THE LEAVES *by E. M. Delafield* (HARPERS. $2.50)

THERE is skilful writing in Miss Delafield's latest book, writing which is at these moments compact and even dramatic; and then there are stretches which seem to be skimped. Perhaps Miss Delafield would herself plead guilty to the latter indictment and at the same time enter the defence that she is interested not in showing the development of character but rather in painting crucial moments in the lives of the characters. This was the method of Beyle, but the great French psychologist succeeded in bridging the gaps in his story by the intensity of his individual scenes. In *Le Rouge et le noir*, for instance, there is not a character whom at the end we do not know, and despite a lack of physical description, visualize. But in *Turn Back the Leaves* only Veronica, Chloe, Joey, and Stephen Bourdillon are seen in the round, and even with them there is a certain vagueness and lack of vitality. The character which should dominate the book, that of the fanat-

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ical Sir Joseph Floyd, is simply the wraith of a wraith. Yet the scenes of the children at Yardley are charmingly portrayed, and there are poignant moments later in the writing. Miss Delafield is an artist, but she has not the passion nor the intensity of genius, which alone could make a book of the type of *Turn Back the Leaves* satisfying. Had she chosen a more leisurely method she probably would have been much more effective.

The story is of an old Catholic English family who live removed from the world under the ægis of a fanatical father and a bigoted though kindly stepmother. The children grow up and either disaster or frustration comes to all except the one illegitimate daughter, Stella. Miss Delafield in a Foreword insists that the book is neither Catholic nor anti-Catholic propaganda. It is certainly not the former. It is true that all Miss Delafield's Catholics, with the exception of the fanatical Sir Joseph, are fully as likable as her Protestant characters, but the final impression given is that Catholicism is a stunting and cruel thing. Miss Delafield has chosen a special, a very special, case. There are probably Catholic families like the Floyds. So probably are there Frenchmen who are prohibitionists. And they are equally typical. As a picture of Catholic life and character Miss Delafield has stacked the cards. Had she set out to make a character study in abnormality the result would have been more effective and perhaps more honest. In Sir Joseph Floyd she had a fascinating subject for such a study, but Sir Joseph remains simply a sort of bloodless ogre.

GRENVILLE VERNON

FROST IN APRIL *by Malachi Whitaker* (CAPE & SMITH. $2.50)

MRS. WHITAKER is a very promising writer with certain obvious defects which can probably be remedied. She has a rare quality of imagination, clear and liquid, but it is one that easily dissipates itself in fancy or thickens into sentiment. She has, too, an admirable descriptive economy; she can create a field, a weather, an atmosphere, in one sentence; but it falls too often into flat monotony on the one hand or into awkward and childish affectations on the other.

This book is a collection of twenty stories about the days and hours, hopes, desires and disappointments of certain provincial English men and women of the working classes. Actually, two of these are fully able to satisfy the very exacting demands we make upon the short story. We no longer ask a great deal in the way of plot; we set few limitations upon circumstance or character—it does not in effect matter very much whether the scene is New York or Cloudcuckooland, whether the characters are policemen or pink glass elephants; but we explicity require that every story should have a logic of its own to which the characters and situations conform and with which the reader can find himself in exact agreement. "Old Abraham" and "The Enchanted Morning" have this logic. One reading of them will prove that Mrs. Whitaker has a form, just as one reading of "New Moon" will show how far she is from being certain of it.

ROGUE HERRIES *by Hugh Walpole* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.50)

FRANCIS HERRIES, in his narrow Cumberland valley, was known as the Rogue, the devil, the friend of witches, the man who sold his mistress for forty shillings, and was said to have murdered his first wife. He was proud, handsome, of good family; a dicer, wencher, and drinker; and a man who hated and despised all men as himself, because he could not attain something (call it soul) which would make it worth his while to be honorable, constant, pure, gentle and so forth. In a great love for his second wife, a gipsy off the fells, Herries finds his soul, but she can only love him when all the externals of the old body have left him in his old age.

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This, if any Walpole novel can be said to have a core, is the core of *Rogue Herries*. But Francis is not a whole. It is impossible to see all round him. He is rather the sum of those individuals, events and places which make up this beautifully contrived eighteenth-century Cumberland. The two are so dependent upon each other that if every person, every adventure, every stock, stone, house or piece of furniture were not constantly in labor to shape this hero, inform his conflict, and define his fate, the whole deceptive structure would collapse.

For deceptive it is, first and last. Mr. Walpole's work is emotional and suggestive, and can only be examined in the twilight of one's own response to it. He does not *communicate,* he deceives. He is the master illusionist, the literary Maskelyne. His story is a subtle contrivance of colored lights and mirrors, through which his characters, great or small, move to the compulsion of destiny—itself the lights and mirrors—and with their slightest gestures preserve the illusion of enormous conflict. His frequent excursions into reality are in the nature of asides, to take one's attention off some difficult trick; and the more profuse his documentation, the more one is aware of having been skilfully deceived. No other novelist is so dependent upon an audience, or can do so much with an audience when he has one. And this, as *Rogue Herries* shows perhaps more clearly than any other novel, is many things more than artfulness and only something less than art.

THE ADVENTURES OF MARIO *by Waldemar Bonsels* (BONI. $3.00)

WHEN he was twelve years old, Mario's mother died. "Let no one be disturbed", says the author, "because this story begins sadly, for it goes along and ends happily". It goes along with Mario to the forest; to the old herb woman who takes pity on him; the various world of nature to which he goes to school, and by understanding learns to subdue; the forester who captures him for a poacher; and finally the beautiful lady on a white horse who takes him away to her castle forever.

The nature in this book is well enough: but we must judge Bonsels by his own standards. His *Maya the Bee* is one of the most charming books of the century and a masterpiece of pure sentiment. In his *Indian Journey* this sentiment is adulterated; and *Mario* is so far corrupted that the translation is clumsy and embarrassed—it cannot shape itself to what it is meant to say. For English is not a "sentimental" language: in proof of which, let anyone search those places where unwanted volumes accumulate, and he will find a hundred older Marios, justly neglected.

GEORGE DANGERFIELD

MARTIN BIRCK'S YOUTH *by Hjalmar Söderberg* (HARPERS. $2.50)

IT IS of Söderberg's own youth that we read in this fastidious, delicately shadowed narrative. The book is steeped in that golden nostalgic glow often found in autobiographical novels. But in spite of any homesickness for lost youth it is a truthful unromantic story. Life comes with no blaze of glory to this young poet. Here are no raptures, no great love, no driving ambition. The boy seems to have been born wise, disillusioned, frustrated. He accepts with calm the dulness of a clerk's life, the humiliation of poverty, the backward-slipping of time, the impossibility of saying what one wishes upon paper, the inadequacy of bought love, the inadequacy (towards the end of the book) of a good love outside convention.

One of the characters says, "I believe in the lust of the flesh and the incurable loneliness of the soul". For a second one feels that here is the kernel of the book. But no—not quite. These sad amours never rise (or sink) to anything so active as lust. And "the incurable loneliness of the soul"? Let that stand as the *leit-motiv* of the book.

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AARON TRAUM *by Hyman and Lester Cohen* (LIVERIGHT. $2.50)

HERE is a stark and truthful novel filled with the blood, sweat and breath of humanity. With the exception of the rather disconcerting last chapter, it is a moving piece of realism and a sad commentary on the manner in which America welcomes foster children.

The Jewish immigrant has not lacked spokesmen. Some twenty years ago, Mary Antin first told his tragic story. Since then there has been an impressive and fairly large flow of books telling us how the mirage of America has lured its millions, how the ancient, decorous life in the old-world village was left, how days in the steerage were endured, and then the reality—the pot of dust at the base of the rainbow. Poverty, squalor, disillusionment, maladjustment and, in the end, if the immigrant is hardy enough, if luck is with him, a new and freer life.

In *Aaron Traum* something of the same story is told. The child comes to New York. He sweats in the sweat shop, he pulls bastings, he eats the bread of poverty, he lies down in filth. He learns from book and life. He loves and is fortunate in his women. He makes friends and is fortunate in his friends. He loses the immemorial customs of his fathers. He loses that awful Jehovah, who in Russia brooded over the peasant hovel as once the spirit of the Lord brooded over the waters of chaos. But, because he is good, kind, loving, he finds other things. Aaron is not only idealistic and intelligent; he is enduring. And there is much of the old patience of the Jew in him, who when all has been taken away still has so much left. Perhaps unconsciously the authors have emphasized not so much what wrongs were put upon their young hero, as with how much fortitude he was able to endure. There is something heartening about the lack of complaining, the sense of good humor even in circumstances where bad humor could so well have been excused.

ARM'S LENGTH *by John Metcalfe* (SCRIBNER'S. $2.50)

SINCE first we read *Macbeth* and *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, we have been well accustomed to the tragedy with comedy thrown in. Here, as in *The Constant Nymph*, we have the reverse of the old formula.

The opening chapter has all the ingredients of the typical light English novel. The engaging but slightly dull young man so dear to the English novelist, standing upon the deck of a Channel Island steamer, the pretty girl with her suspicious-looking escort who barely makes the boat, the mildly humorous seasickness which besets everybody, the difficulties of the hero who does not know what to do with the girl after the villain has been lost off—this is real comedy stuff. But at the end, when we meet the sad woman who has been the pretty girl, bearing the casual young man's child while his wife, also expecting an heir, waits upon her and slowly drives everyone (including herself) into hysteria with her nervous and nerve-racking charity—this is bitter, ironic tragedy.

It is not much before the end that the moral (for it really has a moral in the old-fashioned manner) evolves. I would sum up this text in some such way as this: "Amiable weakness, the holding of life at arm's length, never coming to grips with reality, hurts more people and does more harm than the seven deadly sins with their more obvious, more advertised wickedness".

ESTHER FORBES

UNCLE SAM: IN THE EYES OF HIS FAMILY *by John Erskine* (BOBBS-MERRILL. $2.50)

MR. ERSKINE had a novel and an interesting idea when he undertook to write a biography of our national temperament about the cartoon figure of Uncle Sam. But perhaps he did not realize what a difficult and exacting task he had set himself. For while our ideas

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about Helen of Troy, Galahad or Adam and Eve are rather hazy, every reader of his latest "novel" will have a very definite impression of Uncle Sam. And to this reviewer Mr. Erskine's characterization is sadly inadequate, and the allegorical story of Uncle Sam's life but a travesty upon the growth of the American spirit.

The book starts off bravely with a pleasantly satiric picture of Uncle Sam and the other members of his family. We meet Antoinette, a fascinating girl with a sharp tongue, prudent and a little calculating; Orlando, whose ideas were active but whose body was indolent; John, with his turn for facts and for work, and Frederick, the philosopher of the family, who had a genius for patient toil. Eventually Uncle Sam's wife appears upon the scene and poor Priscilla, with her stern morality and failure to appreciate her exciting husband, is a disheartening caricature of American women which would hardly seem justified.

Uncle Sam of course turns into a success everything to which he sets his hand and becomes prosperous and powerful to the mystification and resentment of his relatives. They are glad to turn to him for help but while extracting every favor which his generous spirit is only too glad to accord them, they belabor him pitilessly for his absorption in material things and his neglect of the finer aspects of life. Steeped in their own traditions they fail to realize that it is not the acquisition of wealth which dominates his life, but an adventurous love of change and growth. They cannot understand a man who so brazenly neglects the past and is so bound up in the future.

Nothing could be more pathetic than the final scene in which the family unites to criticize that preoccupation with money from which they are so glad to reap the benefits. Sam knew that it was not money for which he really cared, but he was crushed by their attack. Mr. Erskine makes our hearts bleed at such tragic misunderstanding. But as Sam sits there with his head sunk deep between his hands he suddenly looks up from the paper he had been reading and with a choking voice announces that Western Common has gone up. The family could only glance at one another for "they knew then he was hopeless".

Mr. Erskine writes with the smooth adequacy which we might expect and there are again and again flashes of delicious irony. But the keen wit and sustained satire which made some of his earlier books so fascinating are largely lacking, while as a novel *Uncle Sam* is rather dull.

FOSTER RHEA DULLES

THE IMMORALIST *by André Gide* (KNOPF. $2.50)

WHEN this volume first appeared in France in 1902, André Gide called it a novel, but even before his enthusiasm for Dostoievski had led him to abandon his usual form in *The Counterfeiters*, he decided to reserve that title for a more ambitious work by classifying all his early novels as "tales". And his recent return, with *The School for Wives* and the yet untranslated *Robert*, to this type of psychological narrative conceived in the form of a letter or diary, proves conclusively that he feels more at home in the tale than in the novel. *The Immoralist*, then, is typical of Gide at his best.

One must not seek a plot here, for the entire action takes place in the soul of Michel, a young scholar who, after a severe illness, discovers life and begins to scorn culture while exalting his instincts. In his pursuit of new sensations he neglects his wife until she dies of the disease contracted while nursing him. Michel's particular return to nature takes the form of associating with Arab boys and Norman peasants and encouraging them in their petty thefts.

No one indeed can read this book without being aware that Michel's expansive discovery of life merely symbolizes his rather tardy

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recognition of his own unorthodox sexual orientation. But the author, ever a master of evasion and insinuation, does no more than hint in his preface at a problem "of very urgent import and very general interest". It is just this timid half-approach to a difficult subject that is at once the most characteristic and most reprehensible feature of Gide's work. The Socratic dialogues of *Corydon*, which Gide withheld until after Marcel Proust's nobler treatment of the same theme, fail to convince because of their almost scientific impersonality; and even when he descends to intimate confessions as in *Si le Grain ne meurt*, he draws back in fear.

This constant insinuation, however, would not be altogether pernicious if it did not serve as a basis for André Gide's inverted moralizing. With calculated perversity he has assumed the rôle of moral anarchist and launched a Nietzschean theory of immorality thinly veiled in a pretence of stern Protestantism and frequent quotations from the Gospels. Fortunately Gide the tempter does not clothe his doctrines in a sufficiently attractive dress to reach and corrupt a very wide public. *The Immoralist*, true to form, barely holds the reader's interest with an unfulfilled promise which deceives him in the end.

PETER VINCENT

GRIM YOUTH *by John Held, Jr.* (VANGUARD. $2.50)

JOHN HELD, JR., has long been known for his cartoon representations of the more obvious blatancies of the successive Younger Generations. Now he has carried his point of view over into fiction. On the whole the attitude doesn't survive the rigors of transplanting. The merit of his cartoons resides in their swift, destructive presentation at a glance of characteristics that may be grasped in a glance. In *Grim Youth* (the May choice of The Book League of America), his castigation is no less effective, but therein lies the rub. He gets his point home so well that one is apt to fling the book into the ash barrel after the fourth story. The book being out of the way, the logical next step would be to go forth and campaign for Birth Control, the formation of a Society for the Complete Suppression of Adolescence, and the compulsory use of the cat-o'-nine-tails by all parents with children of high school age.

Hope for the United States exists in the suspicion that Mr. Held's crass, completely unlovely and wholly inhuman brats are not representative—or, at most, only representative of the rancid element of high school and college society that attracts attention by running down policemen while going seventy miles an hour down the main street. If Mr. Held is correct in his diagnosis, then much has happened to American youth since I first entered a pool room ten years ago. Mr. Held's "Man of the World", for example, tells us of a youth who has less latent humanity in his system than all of Al Capone's body guards. Only one story in *Grim Youth* evokes pity, and that is "Miss Universe"—a straight bit of reporting of the conversation of a girl who makes it a speciality to enter all available beauty contests. The rest, excepting the rather obvious "The Ride of the Valkyries", are wholly caricature; and we react to them as we do to caricature. Mr. Held's patter is up-to-the-minute, but it doesn't underline character. It is, therefore, not to be compared to the Americanese of Ring Lardner.

JOHN CHAMBERLAIN

DON JUAN'S DAUGHTERS *by Irene Forbes-Mosse* (DODD, MEAD. $2.50)

As VERNON LEE points out in the introduction to *Don Juan's Daughters*, Irene Forbes-Mosse, whose family tree bears such interesting blossoms as Bettina Brentano, the Brothers Grimm, Achim von Arnim and Sophie La Roche, has little need, as an author, for ancestral introduction. For in her prose she is an accomplished artist. The pres-

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ent volume holds three short novels, each very different from the others in spirit, within one binding, and under a title that is admirable for the first story, a Mozartian *capriccio*, but grotesquely jarring in relation to the others, "Dream Children", and "The Burden".

In the title story she presents Hilaria, an amusingly imaginative lady with the gift of the Brothers Grimm for telling a fairy tale. Seated on a rep sofa in an old-fashioned hostelry, beneath "portraits of their late Highnesses, steel engravings after Winterhalter, in the splendour of their wedding garments", Hilaria concocts a delightful story: Donna Anna from Mozart's *Don Juan* playing godmother to the daughters of Donna Elvira, her morose and disagreeable rival, Don Juan's incredibly faithful wife. Hilaria has never been to Spain, but from Mozart, Goya's paintings, the imagination of her childhood, years of opera-going, and visits to the hill towns of Italy, she makes an amusing backdrop for her story, and her characters are charmingly entertaining. "Don Juan's Daughters" is entirely successful. "Dream Children" portrays the life of a delicate, sensitive woman defeated by facts; she finds her life in her imagination.

One inevitably remembers Willa Cather's *A Lost Lady* in reading "Dream Children": the same care for background, the same delicate realization of the subtleties of character, the same refined sense of detail and proportion are there; Mrs. Forbes-Mosse is as sure an artist and has as deep an insight into life as Miss Cather. In "The Burden" there is a passionate sense of dramatic reality: an architect, impoverished by the war, and his wife, who gave up an operatic career, are divided by his idiot son, the child of his student days; the idiot's nurse, a delicate high-born girl, also impoverished by the war, fails in her duty and allows the child to die; the millionaire who is her employer's patron approves her act, but cannot quiet her conscience. This story holds, in its restrained compass more life and interest than most of the problem novels of two generations. Mrs. Forbes-Mosse is a superb writer, and Oakley Williams an extraordinarily gifted translator.

COLEY TAYLOR

THE MAN WHO LOST HIMSELF *by Osbert Sitwell* (COWARD-MCCANN. $2.50)

NEVER compelling that sustained attention that demands a book be read until it is finished, *The Man Who Lost Himself* has, nevertheless, a beauty of phraseology and a richness of imagery that far transcend the story itself and that hold the interest until the end is reached.

A plot that could be handled with full justice in a short story is the peg upon which is hung a lazy, rambling tale. Tristram Orlander, in company with the narrator, goes to Spain to recover from a love affair and a nervous breakdown. Particularly in Granada he finds healing in the languorous air and the natural beauty of the country, until he becomes a prey to loneliness and experiences an extraordinary shock. Jestingly he asks for his own name at the desk of a hotel, and is shown to a room where a man sits whom he recognizes to be himself as he will look when he is old. Many years later this incident is repeated in reverse at the moment of death.

A long preamble seeks to justify the mystic quality of the experience. This, coming before the reader knows what the experience is to be, is the only portion of the book that tends to become tiresome. The whole leaves one with the impression that Mr. Sitwell is a genius, and no small genius at that, at writing beautifully about nothing very significant.

WAR NURSE *Anonymous* (COSMOPOLITAN. $2.00)

WHETHER *War Nurse* is indeed a "true story" does not matter. If it is not, it so well could have been that there is no difference. In fact, given the situation, which was common

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enough, one supposes, the persons involved could have acted in no other way. The author has concerned herself with characters in reaction to movements, and has chosen to concentrate on the overthrow of convention and the old morality.

There is less of the war, and more of what the war did in this than in most war books. There are no battles, no atrocities, very little of hospital horrors. An air raid is made an excuse for the theft of an automobile and a joy-ride in the woods, which are described much more fully than the raid itself. Thus at every turn the writer, who is called Corinne Andrews, depicts each phase of her work in the hospital at Neuilly only as a background that influenced her changing standards and those of the people with whom she came in contact. And since the standards of sex are regarded as of paramount importance in a national morality, sex is dealt with here as of paramount importance.

Corinne, a member of a wealthy family in New York's best residential section, is educated abroad to hold a place in society bound by traditions of conduct. Not only is sex knowledge non-existent, but so is curiosity. The conditions under which that was possible no longer prevail. For Corinne's generation the war changed things before their eyes, upsetting accepted right and wrong and substituting a *carpe diem* philosophy that afterwards helped some people to a fuller realization of themselves, and hindered others. Of these latter the writer says:

> Often I think of Gracie and Harry, when I hear people say that the war was such a great experience that it must have done a lot for those who took part in it. Isn't it possible that an experience can be too great for people of moderate capacity to profit by it? There are those two people, to whom the war revealed that what men and women do for each other with their bodies and their souls when they are in love is so real a good that it will help them to go on living when the earth is rocking under their feet. But they can't keep that in their mind, now, because their minds aren't that size; all they remember is that when they got this revelation they barked their shins on a convention.

Corinne lives with a man in France, and on his return, lives with him in New York, although he is married. If hers is a true reaction, which need not, I think, be questioned, there is still doubt as to whether it is a general one. When the author generalizes from the experience of the individual she lays herself open to criticism. I have talked with women in the war who were so stunned by what they saw and the work they did that sex was as unreal to them as a fairy tale, and as remote. The cry "all generalizations are lies", however, can be applied to any war book. This is sincerely written, with a definite message.

MYRA M. WATERMAN

THE FOOLS' PARADE *by John W. Vandercook* (HARPERS. $2.50)

THOUGH in *Black Majesty* Mr. Vandercook handled gorgeous material in a magnificent manner, in this book he lets all the opportunities that Africa has to offer slip from his grasp or uses them ineptly. However much he strains for an effect in these stories they are artificial and machine-made. The career of Henry Christophe in Haiti should have made him realize that neither life nor art is a pattern neatly worked out to prove a theory or point a moral.

Yet in "Djombé River", where he has a situation as good as any of Somerset Maugham's, and in "Funk", where black magic and a female moron struggle in a young man's life, the author begs the question and ignores all the overtones. The title story, in which the survivor of five escaped prisoners relates their trip through the jungle, has the vividness and the casual informality such a tale should have. The stories are all readable and interesting, but the magic of Mr. Vandercook's previous work is missing.

PAUL ALLEN

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THE ASKING PRICE *by Helen Hull* (COWARD-MCCANN. $2.50)

HELEN HULL has finally and undeniably demonstrated her skill in the craft of fiction in *The Asking Price.* This story of a frustrated poet, set against the background of a provincial college town, is grimly and dramatically effective.

The evolution of Oliver Gilbert is principally directed by his wife, Audrey—a pretty, narrow-minded, rather hard young woman, with no particular imagination, and with an unbounded respect for social propriety and for economic success. Beneath her unintermittent prodding, the idealistic, aspiring, poetic college instructor becomes a successful professor, full of years and scholarly honors, head of his department and assistant dean of the college. Oliver is bound securely to the treadmill of his barren and successful days, first by his wife's charm, and by her inflexible notions of good and evil, later by his love for his daughter Olive, to whom he passes the burden of his dreams.

The book is well and graphically written, crowded with fine characterizations, with excellently contrived and effective incidents. Yet it is not wholly rounded or convincing. A glint of humor, which it lacks, or a tinge of irony, or even the admission of another side to the unbalanced equation of Oliver Gilbert's life, might have imparted to it a quality of enduring satisfaction.

MARGARET WALLACE

FLIGHT WITHOUT END *by Joseph Roth* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.50)

ONE more spiritual autobiography, one more novel dictated by the disillusionment of post-war Europe is *Flight Without End.* The hero Tunda, we cannot help feeling, is Roth the man regarded with the extended vision of Roth the writer; and his restless flight across Europe in search of his war-time fiancée represents the search for lost romance in a world of stale disenchantments. That the quest fails doubly shows us just how completely the Tundas of Europe are victims of their generation: for not only does the girl fail to recognize Tunda when he finds her, but Tunda himself is beyond caring or doing anything about it.

The familiar note struck in this book, the spectacle it presents of one more *âme égarée,* makes us pause for artistic no less than human reasons. For in the case of men who, like Roth, have real talents, these contemplations of the Waste Land—the only land they know or seem fated ever to know—indicate that the talents will never reach their full flowering. Roth has written eight books, and how many people have heard of him? Yet he has both natural gifts and acquired polish and skill; his little pictures of a city or a milieu, his snapshots of a personality or the summary of an existence are delightfully keen and witty. Reading them, one thinks of Bruno Frank or Jean Giraudoux. But all these merits are doomed to remain on the level of dilettantism so long as Roth's soul is sick and his only reaction to life one of impotence and futility. In an age whose literature is surcharged with purposelessness and negation he, as one more messenger who bears the same tidings, must represent, not only a human but also an artistic tragedy. This is not to discount nor pass over his sufferings, nor to deny that they have bred ironic sensibilities which are culturally valuable; it is only to insist because one must that such writing has small moral or emotional leverage, small contact with the life that still continues, though Roth's be ten years ended.

LOUIS KRONENBERGER

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BIOGRAPHY

BAUDELAIRE *by Lewis Piaget Shanks* (LITTLE, BROWN. $3.50)

IN his recent *Variété II*, Paul Valéry says: "Baudelaire has reached the height of glory. . . . If among our poets there are any greater and more richly gifted than Baudelaire, there is none more *important*". And one might add that among the numerous studies in French and English which have contributed to the posthumous fame of this long-misunderstood poet, none is more important or more satisfying than that by Mr. Shanks, who had already given us his excellent translation of *Les Fleurs du mal*. For unhampered by the vague enthusiasm of Arthur Symons or the scientific thesis of certain French writers, he presents the man and his work in a manner at once sympathetic and critical.

In this very living biography we can forget for the moment the satanic genius who, in Victor Hugo's words of faint praise, "created a new shudder", and follow rather the pitiful sufferings of the man. In 1842, at twenty, Charles Baudelaire was an extraordinarily idealistic youth, full of promise and confidence; in 1866, pursued by creditors and ravaged by disease, abandoned by his friends and constantly scolded by his adored mother, after having been fined for immoral writings and seen his masterpieces ignored by a hostile world, he could escape suicide only through recourse to laudanum. Yet, somehow, he never abandoned his ideal, though he often mocked it; in his love affairs as in his financial relations, in his experiments with drugs as in his literary projects, he never lost the need of creating a dream-world about him. In this respect, as Mr. Shanks indicates, his poems "moulded him no less than he moulded them" until the poet became "the victim of a youthful mask, which grew into his flesh and became a part of it".

This picture of the poet does justice also to the critic, for as Baudelaire himself said, "It is impossible for a poet not to contain a critic". And besides that self-criticism which is inseparable from artistic creation, he exercised his taste on his contemporaries by writing the first intelligent judgments of Delacroix, Daumier, Constantin Guys and Wagner. But the greatest of his non-poetic works is undoubtedly his interpretation of Edgar Allan Poe, to the rewriting of whose stories—for the translation far surpasses the original—he devoted seventeen years, with the result that Poe now enjoys a European reputation such as he has never had at home.

Swinburne perhaps best epitomized Baudelaire's threefold claim to fame when he called him "the illustrious poet, the faultless critic, the fearless artist". Unfortunately Mr. Shanks does not give much consideration to the literary innovations which establish Baudelaire's place in the tradition of French poetry—a singularly significant position between two great movements, where, through his insistence upon a more solid substance and purer form, he stands out as the turning point in the evolution from the romanticism of Hugo to the symbolism of Verlaine and Mallarmé.

JUSTIN O'BRIEN

SIR HARRY JOHNSTON, HIS LIFE AND LETTERS *by Alex Johnston* (CAPE & SMITH. $3.50)

THE LATE Sir Harry Johnston, whom most American readers will remember as the author of *The Gay-Dombeys* and of *Mrs. War-*

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ren's Daughter, those ingenious postscripts to Dickens and Shaw, was a virtuoso in many lines. He told a good deal about himself in *The Story of My Life*: now his brother (who was also for thirteen years his private secretary) has supplemented his autobiography by this book of reminiscences.

We are reminded that Sir Harry was not only an explorer, a Doctor of Science, a Governor of Uganda, a knight, a novelist, a freelance journalist, but a faithful if uninspired artist, a writer of creditable *vers de société*, a friend of kings and cardinals, of presidents and peers. He wrote forty books; he discovered the okapi; he was the originator of the phrase (and, says his brother, of the idea) "from the Cape to Cairo"; he added 400,000 square miles to the British Empire. With all this wealth of achievement he was not really very widely known, and his services were never rewarded with high office. "He might have been more . . . appreciated," says his brother, "had he accomplished less and spoken in fewer languages. . . . The worst that can be said of him is that he attempted too much."

For those who have been to Africa, or who plan to go, or who like to think that some day they might, possibly; or for those who enjoy (as who does not?) the impression of being escorted behind the scenes of world enterprise, this record of Sir Harry Johnston's full and active life will be well worth the reading.

T. S. MATTHEWS

THE STRICKEN DEER: OR THE LIFE OF COWPER *by David Cecil* (BOBBS-MERRILL. $5.00)

WILLIAM COWPER, English poet of the eighteenth century whose letters vie with his verses and whose reputation hazardously survives in anthologies and selections of these two gentlest arts, lived and died in fear of the dark. The most blameless person in the world, he was oppressed by so powerful a sense of sin and so terrible a dread of damnation that he failed to kill himself only to go mad. He recovered, entered the arena of life, shrank again in terror, found a semi-pensioned refuge at various hearths, mostly at those of the Evangelicals and of a group of tender-hearted women who mothered and befriended him. He lived and breathed in the gardens and at the hearths of country vicarages, a mild man who hungered for affection, a mild poet who fell short of ecstasy in his poetry, to achieve it, in a somewhat inverted fashion, in those moments of madness when even religious consolations failed to blunt the edge of his fear. William Cowper has been regarded as either the chief casualty caused by the intensification of the consciousness of sin which the Evangelical movement brought to Englishmen in the eighteen century, or as the beneficiary of its consolations.

The author of this work, a young man of title who has browsed to advantage in the un-Elysian fields of eighteenth-century literature and research, inclines to the view that the madness of Cowper did not originate in religion, but in some intimate physical defect, the brooding on which beclouded his life. With all his grace of style and knowledge of the period, the sympathy felt and conveyed for the subject of his story and the intimate description and flashes of the gentle women and the loyal men who entered the life of Cowper, our author cannot but fail, I fear, to overcome the resistance offered by the shrinking and uneventful churchmousy quality of Cowper himself. A mad poet who goes religious, or a religious poet who goes mad, seems to be eventfulness itself, but there is little opportunity for a "Life" about a man who feared to, or could not, live (and this is not meant in the narrowly physiological sense) and one, moreover, whose poetry was of too minor a strain to justify intenser curiosity in biographers.

The Stricken Deer has something of the remote charm of a drama which proceeds among a group of Dresden china figures

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under bell-shaped glass; the drama is undoubtedly important to the enacting figures, but the observer must focus his attention too sharply for comfort to catch the miniature movements and the minor tragedy. Poor William Cowper!

HARRY SALPETER

THE UNKNOWN WASHINGTON *by John Corbin* (SCRIBNER'S $4.00)

IN VIEW of the quantity of material already available upon Washington, another volume devoted to the biographic facts of his career would probably have been useless. In *The Unknown Washington*, Mr. Corbin has wisely not attempted to rework the ground already adequately tilled. He has begun his investigation, instead, at the point where other biographers have left off, and the result is a brilliant piece of exposition and interpretation. Mr. Corbin holds that Washington's part in the formulation of the Constitution has been neglected, that the strength and purity of the republican principles which he embedded in the fabric of our government have been misunderstood since the "revolution of 1800", when our republicanism was overlaid with, and all but overturned by, the principles of Jeffersonian democracy.

The obscurity which, in Mr. Corbin's estimation, has shrouded Washington's political thought is due largely to two circumstances —first, to the fact that Washington was a man of deeds, and that he never spoke simply to express an opinion, but only when words were necessary to produce a decisive result; second, to the ignorance, among historians and biographers generally, of his personal character. Mr. Corbin finds in the man of whom Channing said that "no more elusive personality exists in history", a nature richer and more complicated than any among the brilliant and versatile group with which he surrounded himself, an exceedingly contradictory nature, at once cunning and honest, proud and curiously humble, personally reckless and violent, yet cautious and temperate in the service of the public, a passionate and highly emotional nature, in short, checked and controlled by a superb will.

Mr. Corbin's essay is pungently written, well documented, and authoritative. As an investigation of the origin of the American republic, and the part played in that origin by the most worshipped and least understood personage among its founders, it is second to none in brilliance and logic.

SIMON BOLIVAR *by Hildegarde Angell* (NORTON. $3.00)

NO BIOGRAPHY of that fiery and spectacular hero, Simon Bolivar, could possibly be dull. His career was crowded with drama from the moment when, inspired by the example of Napoleon, he stood on the crest of the Aventine Hill and in sonorous phrases dedicated his life to the cause of South American liberty. He was a brave soldier, a shrewd and daring general, a breath-taking and visionary statesman. He was a veritable hero in misfortune, and in success he was the curled and perfumed idol of the ladies.

Any reader anxious to secure a full and well rounded view of Simon Bolivar's life would do well to read Hildegarde Angell's story, together with the more personalized and impassioned biography of T. R. Ybarra. In Miss Angell's account Bolivar appears, not as the god-like warrior painted by Señor Ybarra, but as the striving man, sometimes guiding events and sometimes guided by them. Miss Angell lacks Ybarra's gift of turning a series of dry military campaigns into a stirring drama, but she has brought to her biography sound scholarship and a finely-tempered judgment. Although her narrative is less thrilling than Ybarra's, it presents much more intelligibly the history of the events surrounding Bolivar's career. She has written the story of Venezuelan liberty, as well as the story of Venezuela's great liberator.

MARGARET WALLACE

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FERDINAND MAGELLAN *by E. F. Benson* (HARPERS. $4.00)

THE story of Magellan will always be worth telling and reading. This hardy Portuguese seaman who hit upon an idea to turn the Pope's division of the world between Spain and Portugal to Spain's account, who transformed the geographer's guess of a passage round America into reality, is a man whose hard-headed judgment stands out in striking contrast to the fanaticism of Columbus. Only in the end, the long-dreamed of Spice Islands actually within his grasp, did success go to his head; and with a foolish, egotistic gesture intended to impress the friendly native king, Magellan brought all he had struggled to accomplish crashing about him—and he himself met death.

In this biography in *The Golden Hind* series, the novelist, E. F. Benson, has compiled the facts of Magellan's career in readable form. It is a good journalistic job done with careful attention to known authorities, but no more. But to compel interest, the author of a biography must have strong personal convictions about his subject; he should be able to add by the force of his ideas a vitality and meaning to the historic fact of a man's life, and this Benson does not do. Yet those who have never read about Magellan will find, even in this rather cold recital of the facts, a book of great interest.

WILLIAM HOWELL WELLS

THE LIFE STORY OF KING GEORGE V *by Richard C. Dent* (DUTTON. $3.90)

GEORGE V *by Sir George Arthur* (CAPE & SMITH. $5.00)

THOUGH even a cat may look at a king it is evident that an official biographer cannot. Both of these books fail, by reason of their subject, to approach in manner or matter what one expects from biography. One would suspect that the divinity that doth hedge a king had been somewhat dislodged in Mr. Dent's book, since its publication has been forbidden in England until after the monarch's death. But the only possible reason seems to be that His Majesty has decent modesty. The absurd adulation and exaggeration of the book overshadow all of its factual merit.

Sir George Arthur, on the other hand, has made the best of a most difficult job with some humor and a sense of proportion. Refraining from superlatives, his quiet, well-rounded portrait does much to explain the affection and respect the king inspires at home and abroad. The value of the king's position to the Empire and the seriousness and industry which he gives to it are plainly apparent. The book is also, in its way, a fairly comprehensive history of British politics and foreign affairs during the last fifty years.

PAUL ALLEN

RUTHERFORD B. HAYES *by H. J. Eckenrode* (DODD, MEAD. $5.00)

TO HAVE the story of a Northern Republican President written by a Southerner who is presumably a Democrat is a pleasing novelty. Mr. Eckenrode is the first writer to discover with elaborateness the merits of Rutherford B. Hayes as a man and a statesman. Called "fraud" and pictured with the word on his brow by Charles A. Dana in the New York *Sun*, with doubt perpetually cast upon his title, though legally seated, the man from Ohio has been slow to reach his proper place in history. Mr. Eckenrode, while he comes to some unjust conclusions as regards others, lifts Mr. Hayes fairly into view; shows how he proved himself the man for the hour, and perhaps, when full measure is taken, performed his duties better than any President before or since his time. He saved his party from itself, cleaned out the corruption accumulated during eight years of Grant, resumed specie payments, inaugurated civil service and removed Federal bayonets from

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the South. He vetoed Chinese exclusion and never lacked the courage to do the right thing. The author neglects to note that he won his third election to the governorship of Ohio in 1875, and so made himself available as the best timber to defeat James G. Blaine for the nomination in 1876, because of a Greenback-Labor ticket (headed by my ancient cousin John Seitz), which split the vote for "Old Bill" Allen, who was up for re-election. Mr. Eckenrode has so good a case that it is regrettable to find much fury in his text. His hatred of the Southern aristocrat and the Northern Republican is about equal in intensity. The volume is an excellent starter for a new series of biographies covering political leaders since the War-between-the-States period.

DON C. SEITZ

EMILY DICKINSON: FRIEND AND NEIGHBOR *by MacGregor Jenkins* (LITTLE, BROWN. $3.00)

FIFTY-ODD years ago, MacGregor Jenkins, son of an Amherst clergyman, played about the Dickinson yard under the elfin eye of "Aunt Emily". In this artless sheaf of childhood memories, he recalls her as a mysterious and elusive figure in white, ready to join the children's make-believe and equally ready to slip quietly away at the approach of grown-ups. Unfortunately, Mr. Jenkins labors under a double handicap. He saw her in the flesh only when a small boy, and he sees her now in a blur of awe and adoration. The result is hardly more than a luminous void. "I know," he says, "that the hearts of these children turned instinctively to the heart in that house, as young and as pure as theirs. In that house dwelt a Rare Presence." As an actual contribution to our knowledge of the poet, the book has little value. The author emphasizes once more Emily's morbid fear of people ("If the butcher boy came, I'd jump right into the flour barrel"); he tells us that she was accustomed to play on her brother's piano a piece of her own composition entitled, "The Devil"; he shows her as a fellow conspirator lowering food in a basket from her window to the children; and he describes her all-night vigil to watch the circus go by. Apart from these few meagre facts, the chief interest of the book is in the half-dozen notes to the Jenkins family; notes whose wilful obscurity serve once more to emphasize the strange psychic trauma that constitutes the mystery of Emily Dickinson. Here, for example, is a typical letter sent with a gift of flowers:

> Dear Friend—I am picking you a flower for remembering Summer. He was his Country's —She is Time's—When Continents expire, the Giants they discarded are Promoted to endure.
>
> EMILY.

Reading such a letter as this in the light of her self-imposed isolation, one speculates on the possibility that she saw herself as a sort of white-clad Delphic Priestess, inviolable, remote, dedicated to the gods, communicating with the world only in brief and cryptic oracles. Such a "make-believe", set in motion by an instinctive need for self-reassurance as a result of her unhappy love affair and her comparative obscurity, might easily build itself gradually into a mild and secret obsession that would explain those eccentricities which so puzzled her contemporaries.

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ESSAYS AND CRITICISM

CIRCUMFERENCE: VARIETIES OF METAPHYSICAL VERSE, 1456-1928, *edited by Genevieve Taggard* (COVICI-FRIEDE. $6.00)

OURS is an Alexandrian age of revival and cult. Neo-medievalism, neo-classicism, neo-primitivism all have their adherents. In poetry, the generation represented by Léonie Adams, Louise Bogan and Miss Taggard has returned—inducted, perhaps, by Elinor Wylie—to Donne and the "metaphysical" school of the seventeenth century. The critics of this return have been the persuasive and ubiquitous Eliot (especially in *Homage to Dryden*) and his ally, Herbert Read (cf. "The Nature of Metaphysical Poetry", *Criterion*, I, 249 ff).

What is metaphysical poetry? The category is uncertain of definition. Certainly Donne, Lucretius, and the Pope of the *Essay on Man* are not, in one and the same sense, metaphysical poets. Miss Taggard wavers. In her introduction, she professes to take Donne as her norm and Emily Dickinson as his next of kin. So far so good: we understand Miss Taggard to be pursuing Dr. Johnson's sort of metaphysicals. And of this sort Miss Taggard writes acutely. "Such a poet", she tells us, "is born with a salty sanity in his bones"; or again, she observes, justly, that Donne and Dickinson "were both attempting a revolutionary technique, and a plain homely grandeur", achieving a consequent "angularity" which distresses or attracts according to the critic's taste. Both of the poets essayed "the subtlest of all techniques—the form of an idea. Critics have demanded an external lyric gloss of poets who should have gone on eliminating to the metaphysical extent. . . . To give an idea no form but itself, to show it as organic by an inner music, as if the bones of a skeleton were singing in their own rhythm —that is the technical obsession of the metaphysical poet. Beside him every other poet becomes a little diffuse and decorative". Admirably said: this passage takes its place beside a brilliant dictum or two of Eliot's as really clarifying its subject.

But the appended anthology brings confusion, and discovers Miss Taggard wavering dubiously between the norm of Donne (poetry *metaphysical* only in a very special sense: Johnson's nomenclature was not the most appropriate) and something quite different—didactic poetry—that is, poetry which is nearer prose than music and painting.

On any conceivable basis, Miss Taggard's selections are puzzling. She includes, quite properly, twenty-five of Donne's poems, but Miss Dickinson is represented by but six. Shakespeare and Milton are both "conceited" at times, but Miss Taggard can scarcely be thought to select the times. She does not give us Milton's "Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity" or "Shakespeare", but the sonnet "On His Blindness", which is neither metaphysical nor particularly in need of further advertisement. The inclusion of Blake we can understand, but why Pope and Swift, why Gray's "Elegy", why Byron's "Lines Inscribed upon a Cup"? Most puzzling of all, why Poe, and why Swinburne, and why Burns? Poe and Swinburne constitute the antithesis of Donne and Dickinson.

What Miss Taggard might effectively have done was to represent the seventeenth century group, pass to Miss Dickinson, and then give, with some fulness, the contemporary group who revive the spirit and the *concetti* of Donne. This would have made an im-

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pressive testimony to the power of Donne and the persistent pungency of his idiom. But not only is the burden of the book somewhat lost in its conveyance across the intervening centuries: the selections from Miss Taggard's contemporaries are not always the poems which really testify to the renascence. The presence of Sandburg rivals that of Burns in confounding the reader.

The familiar "My Mind to Me A Kingdom Is" is attributed, by some inexplicable fancy, to the composer Byrd. The proof-reading is defective; and the texts of the seventeenth-century poets are sometimes modernized, sometimes not: Cowley's specimens may be taken as example of this ambiguity.

The felicity of Miss Taggard's project renders sadly disappointing the comparative want of taste and precision in its execution.

AUSTIN WARREN

THREE MASTERS: BALZAC, DICKENS, DOSTOEFFSKY *by Stefan Zweig* (VIKING. $3.00)

WE ARE informed by the author of these impassioned interpretations of "the supremely great novelists of the nineteenth century" that the three essays which comprise his book have been penned at various times in the course of ten years. It is not given us to know the dates or the order of their composition. The "essential uniformity" attributed to them by the author can apply only to the manner of presentation, which is on the whole dithyrambic, moving the reader more by the dynamic spirit of the prose than by any adventure of critical discovery. The essays are unequal in merit and scope. By far the most adequate is the Dostoeffsky, which covers more space than the Balzac and the Dickens combined. The matter of space is not in itself important. Its peculiar significance here is that in spite of the preponderant share given to Dostoeffsky, the author is found to express regret for conciseness, more especially in the case of the Russian; which shows where his heart lies. With the Balzac and the Dickens preceding this essay, the impression carried away is that of being conducted through two splendid chambers in order to be shown the still greater splendors of the third. It would have been better, perhaps, if the Dostoeffsky essay had stood alone; beside it the others are strangely inadequate. We should not cavil, I suppose, at this critical disproportion. Enthusiasm, heavens knows, is a rare quality in criticism nowadays, and if Mr. Zweig's book should send readers scurrying for another venture into the labyrinths of *The Brothers Karamazov* or *The Possessed*, the brilliant torch provided by the German critic would not come amiss. The book is avowedly written for those already familiar with the works of the three masters.

Needless to say, Mr. Zweig is not the "pure" literary critic. His method may be called historical-social-literary, made familiar by Georg Brandes; all Russian criticism since Belinsky has been of this nature. It relates the artist to his epoch and his social background and, more particularly since Freud, to his intimate problems. Thus, Balzac, Napoleon-conscious, set out to acquire power and, having after some indecision chosen literature as a profession, made his specific task the conquest of a world of his own making, a world which he peopled with such a host of characters as has never been created by any other novelist. So single-minded was this giant in his creativeness that the critic is quite justified in asserting that even Madame Hanska, the woman he thought he loved, was but a creation of his fantasy. Thus also Dickens, the creator of sweetness and light, the glorifier of family happiness, the cherisher of traditional English humor, throve because Victorian England demanded these things from a writer and he alone was able to supply the demand.

As for Dostoeffsky, that expresser of human duality, pendulating between two extremes, it would be a pity, within the compass of small space, to attempt to interpret Mr.

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Zweig's interpretation which, combining enthusiasm and penetrating analysis, is brilliant enough to suit the most fervent of the master's disciples. It is really worth the price of the book. Except for minor points, the translation by Eden and Cedar Paul is excellent.

STUDIES IN LITERATURE, VOL. III *by Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch* (PUTNAM. $2.50)

SIR ARTHUR QUILLER-COUCH has the supreme gift of a great teacher, that of being able to charm while he instructs. Though most of these studies are cast in the form of lectures, which have once given pleasure to real audiences, there is a studied care and precision about them that, in the reading, leaves the sort of impression to be expected from the best English essays. They are indeed, in theme and manner, English to the core. English in spirit, English in restraint, English in humor—I almost feel impelled to say "humour"—their Englishness is, undoubtedly, half their charm; so that by the time you reach the end you may, with some pertinence, say, "I smell the blood of an Englishman".

In his two essays on "The English Elegy" the author gives a penetrating analysis of this poetic form, illustrated by ample informing data, and concludes that however the form may change, "the function of Elegy must abide, since it renders a permanent service of its own to human life". In the essay on "Dorothy Wordsworth", he traces many sources of her brother William's inspirations to Dorothy's journals, showing how the poet has transmuted the raw material of diary prose into poetical gems. "It was Dorothy, who missed no flower or bird, or comparison of moonlight, that unloosed the spirit of her brother. . . . She touched his lips; and through him, she has left her benign influence upon all the later Romantic poets, to this day". Again, the author dwells on the poetry in "Shakespeare's Comedies", and incidentally takes a whack at Meredith for trying to make Molière out to be a poet. Molière, according to Quiller-Couch, "was a consummate playwright and handler of the comic theme. *But he was no poet*".

Other studies include "Coventry Patmore", "On the New Reading Public", "On Reading for the English Tripos", "W. S. Gilbert". The author is, on occasion, provocative; but, Englishwise, he is not heard to raise his voice.

JOHN CURNOS

LIFE AND MYSELF *by Giovanni Papini* (BRENTANO. $3.00)

DESPITE the misleading publisher's announcement qualifying this as "the latest work from Papini's pen", it is rather a translation of his first book, which appeared in 1906, fifteen years before the *Life of Christ*. In fact, long ago, in a preface wisely omitted from the present edition, the author himself referred to these sketches as youthful productions. With this warning in mind, Papini's "American audience" would do well to withhold its applause another month until the appearance of his stirring *Saint Augustine*, which will not embarrass its publisher in his search for superlatives to adorn the jacket.

Only one adjective, however, fittingly characterizes *Life and Myself*, and that is: maudlin. Papini's violent style, which never fails to shock his urbane brother-Italians, becomes not only lifeless but ridiculous when translated into English. These twenty-six short compositions suggest the daily themes of a college boy torn between imitation of realistic models and a natural tendency towards pseudo-symbolic fairy tales. The new title is not too ambiguous, for as in most puerile works, there is little of life here and much of the author; indeed *The Failure* is proof that Papini can be vastly more interesting when he leaves out Life altogether. The English version is readable, but the unfortunate mistranslation of the very first word hints at its having been made with the aid of a bilingual dictionary and an average ability at guessing.

JUSTIN O'BRIEN

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A VARIED SHELF

THE GREEN PASTURES *by Marc Connelly* (FARRAR & RINEHART. $2.00)

ALTHOUGH a reader of this play cannot hear the Negro choir singing spirituals between the scenes, and cannot view its settings and pageantry, he can recognize in the text the more fundamental qualities which have touched and delighted New York audiences. Here are familiar stories from the Old Testament done over in an African version as they would be imagined by simple and religious Negroes of the deep South. "Unburdened by the differences of more educated theologians," writes Mr. Connelly in a preface, "they accept the Old Testament as a chronicle of wonders which happened to people like themselves in vague but actual places, and of rules of conduct, true acceptance of which will lead them to a tangible, three-dimensional Heaven. In this Heaven, if one has been born in a district where fish frys are popular, the angels do have magnificent fish frys through an eternity somewhat resembling a series of earthly holidays."

But to present the figures of a living religion upon the stage calls for great tact and understanding. Mr. Connelly displays both. He confines his Biblical epic to the Old Testament, only at the end foreshadowing the crucifixion, and thus avoiding the hazardous representation of a Negro Christ, who might well have destroyed the present delicate balance of the play between naïve humor and spirituality. And he presents his material with the simple and reverent attitude of the believer, recognizing that the slightest touch of sophistication would destroy its sincerity and charm. Undoubtedly a strong reason for the play's success is that it is a refreshing contrast to the cynicism and disillusionment of our worldly civilization.

But it is interesting that this play, dealing tenderly with a simple faith, should use a technique which was perfected in a search for a fuller presentation of modern disillusion. It is essentially an expressionist drama. The fable is told in short scenes which fade out one into the next. The settings are frankly conventionalized and symbolic rather than realistic. The characters are treated broadly as types. And the whole action is set one extra remove from reality by being made the dream-like representation of old Pastor Deshee's teachings to his Sunday School class. The expertness acquired in such a play as *Beggar on Horseback* now serves to make possible a spiritual fantasy which could scarcely have been materialized before the expressionists broke down the tight walls of traditional play-writing.

The Green Pastures is unusual and notable in that it rouses simultaneously such strong impulses toward laughter and tears. Throughout it gives an effect similar to that produced in one or two scenes of *Liliom*, when the hero of Molnar's play receives his reward in a heaven of his own imagining, in a fashion at once grotesque and pitiful. Essential to this effect is that the audience should be more sophisticated than the people whose fancies are represented, for laughter and pity and tenderness spring from a sense of superior understanding, and are fundamentally the same as the laughter and pity and tenderness we feel for little children. But the play does more than this. While it is racy with realistic Negro manners, at the same time it stirs us to a recognition of the fundamental kinship of all humanity with these dusky

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souls who are now "jest all lazy, and mean, and full of sin", and again are ready like Hezdrel to die cheerfully for the God of mercy whom he has discovered! And while at times we laugh, we are also wakened to a sad realization of the beauty of illusion, and a tenderness for the faith of those who like little children are fit for the Kingdom of Heaven.

CONVERSATIONS WITH GEORGE MOORE *by Geraint Goodwin* (KNOPF. $3.00)

A YOUNG Welsh journalist, Mr. Goodwin, has played a modest Boswell to Mr. Moore's Johnson, with considerable success in conveying the flavor of his master's personal style. In a little book of 175 pages are recorded Mr. Moore's opinions on a variety of themes such as plagiarism, Anatole France, *Macbeth*, Wagner, Kipling, Chekhov, obscenity, the relation of the artist to the public, paganism, and St. Paul—"the greatest man in the world"—with a passage not now in print elsewhere recording the death of the apostle. Mr. Goodwin prefaces the conversations with three general chapters, in which he develops interestingly the thesis that Mr. Moore's "point of view is the absence of a point of view". Mr. Moore, having no faith, merely observes. He could approach even the life of Christ as only a "man of letters". His style, mirroring his objectivity toward all things, is if anything too studied, too perfect; "for neither angel of tenderness nor the devil of a wild despair is ever allowed to trouble this Bethesda". Thus we may reconcile the contradiction between the egotism of the memoirs and the impersonality of the novels. The author's greatest gift, one infers, is the flexibility with which he adapts himself to varying literary tasks; his greatest service to our letters, to have established "the esthetic novel" in English.

Reading this admiring but intelligent book, one is led to reflect on the values and limitations of the religion of art for art's sake. To Mr. Moore the preservation of artistic detachment is the rule of life, and the detachment is valuable because it is the discipline by which the worshipper may approach the shrine of beauty. Indeed discipline is good, not of itself, but as the only possible means to truly humane ends; and George Moore sets the ordinary writer a high example of disciplined endeavor. But the end of his work can necessarily satisfy few. To few can life ever seem merely the material for art; to few can literature appeal merely as literature. To most men literature will always be valued in proportion as it serves, or seems to serve, a richer and deeper life; and technical and formal beauty valued only in enforcement of this service. The rigid separation that Moore, surviving esthete of the nineties, has made between art and morals has tended to sterilize his work: it bears no offspring of the spirit. "For my part," he is quoted as saying, "I have done with seeking. I have sought and found and taken refuge in art. Art to me is elemental. Men put their faith in many things. One can, let us say, put one's faith in humanity. I cannot do so. To begin with, there are too many people born—and too many of an inferior type—for me to take much interest in them. . . . Art to me is sacred. It is my religion. If there is no art, we all become savages again."

ALAN REYNOLDS THOMPSON

FIVE GENERATIONS *by Margaret Armstrong* (HARPERS. $5.00)

THE letters which make up a large part of this delightful volume cover a period of more than a hundred and fifty years in the editor's own family. There are letters from Scotland, Spain, India, Brazil. There are many from New Jersey and Carolina. But New York is the axis and the majority of the letters are written either to or from New York. There is a dazzling array of balls, races, gaiety among all branches of the family, an in-

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escapable air of good breeding, easy and intelligent living, wit, charm and courage. It is a small but bright and truthful mirror of New York society, its great names and its pleasant ways for many generations. And perhaps more important is the way in which are reflected the undeviating, motivating forces of life in any place and in any age. I refer to such things as the tragic death by plague of the young wife in New Orleans, to that bright seventeenth-century belle, Peggy Marshall, and her futile betrothal to the Spanish don, to the way Commodore Salter missed his wife. The book is full of the most fascinating human relationships.

The volume is magnificently illustrated by reproductions of fine portraits and old prints. The editor has a talent for saying just enough between letters to carry on the narrative and not so much as to intrude the twentieth century into this earlier world of folded letters, candle-light, gallants, hoopskirts and wax flowers.

ESTHER FORBES

INDIAN EARTH *by Witter Bynner* (KNOPF. $2.50)

MR. BYNNER'S book consists of about fifty short poems inspired by the Lake Chapala region in Mexico (well known to readers of D. H. Lawrence, to whom the book is dedicated), a symbolic poetic prologue entitled "The Winged Serpent", and a final section descriptive of seven dances of the Indians of New Mexico and Arizona. Except in the prologue and the dance poems, Mr. Bynner uses an unrhymed stanza, normally of eight lines, the majority of the poems consisting of but a single stanza—as, for instance, this, called "Montezuma".

The sunset was a crown of spiked flame—
"Come, put me on, if you can!" and no one could.
Even the mountain turned its head aside
From coronation, wore but an ashen summit.
Suddenly Montezuma rose again,
Forgot that his young heart was full of dust
And setting on his brow the level turquoise,
Walked with flamingo feathers down the world.

Such splendid and colorful effects, however, are less characteristic than the following brown-toned portrait of "A Boatman".

In a pool of shadow floating cool on the sand,
As if for a fish to lean in motionless,
The boatman lies asleep, shirt wrinkled away
From his brown middle, hands under head, legs
Dreaming of death; and close to him as a weed
Is to a fish, his hat is sleeping too . . . .
How intimate he is with the good earth,
As if, long buried, he was still alive
Among the many other mounds of sand.

One meets here the conviction, frequently suggested and made explicit in the title poem, of the irrefragable bond between this Indian earth and its native inhabitants:

Let come who may with an estranging hand,
Let touch who will this earth so deeply yours,
None of it ever goes away from you.

It is not possible here to indicate the variety of tones and moods which, in Mr. Bynner's expert hands, this simple metrical form is used to express. The series gives a quiet yet vivid rendering of the essential quality of a unique region. In this ancient civilization, so impassive under the age-long process of its vanishing, a sensitive modern spirit has found a retreat, relatively firm and satisfying, from "this confused and separating world". That it is a retreat and not a stable center, is implied by such questioning undertones as we hear in "Idols" or "Water-Hyacinths":

Have I a grievance then against my friends,
Against my lovers? Is love so unavailing,
That here in a rowboat I shrug my naked shoulder
And watch the hyacinth go down the lake?
Do words that were light as air on living lips
Last longer when they crumble underground?
And is the soul an insecurer thing,
Less intimate, than the connecting earth?

STANLEY P. CHASE

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NORTH OF SUEZ *by William McFee* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.50)

GALLIPOLI MEMORIES *by Compton Mackenzie* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.50)

"I CANNOT invent a better story than what actually happened," writes Mr. Mackenzie in his introduction, and proceeds to give us a well documented "novel of fact". "Although projected against a background of the war in a Near East base . . ." says Mr. McFee, in a foreword, "the story is entirely fictitious"; and forthwith he spins a yarn of love and intrigue in Port Said which reads as if it were written in part, at least, from actual records.

As a war writer, the author of *Sinister Street* and *Carnival* does not, in his *Gallipoli Memories*, win a place close to Remarque or even Robert Graves, for he has not known the bitterness and despair of either of these men. The atmosphere he breathed in Greece, as second in command of espionage and contre-espionage for Britain, savors of the kind of stuff he revealed in *The Three Couriers*—a lot of code mumbo-jumbo, penny plots, and bureaucratic shilly-shallying, while on the Western Front a real war was going on. His concern with such trivial matters as silk pajamas, the cut of his uniform, breakfast in bed: these things strike us as curious oddities. But here it is only fair to mention that Mr. Mackenzie tried repeatedly to get into the trenches, only to be kept out because of extreme ill health. But despite his freedom from trench life (a freedom which permitted him to write *Guy and Pauline* while on duty), he did manage to get into the thick of the fighting around Helles. The bestial stench of death and vermin and the desolation of the battlefields he has recorded in passages of memorable prose; while only a few pages farther on he has set down delightfully written, minute observations on nature, such as an encounter between an ant-lion and a soldier-ant or the discovery of a lark's nest with the hen bird sitting close.

The clear, balanced style is highly commendable, stopping just short of sleek urbanity. Perhaps it is best illustrated in a description of his association with Valentine Braithwaite, a young subaltern. To pass away the tedium of waiting for orders to go up, they planned a dinner-party for that hazy time "after the war", to which the elder man was to invite some actresses—which to the youth were still rather mythical creatures. It became a sort of fairy tale to the boy:

> After the Dardanelles were abandoned Val Braithwaite went back to his regiment and was killed in France; but I think that were I to walk again along that narrow sandy [Ægean] beach I should find myself telling that fairy tale yet once more to a tall sunburnt young Wykehamist beside me, though the Helles guns should be silent as his voice forevermore, and only the larks should be singing above those rolling dunes of Kephalo where so many hopes withered that summer like the grass, but never like the grass grew green again in spring.

Mr. McFee's book is valuable chiefly for the light it casts upon the incompetence of British higher officialdom in the Mediterranean. The book is packed with mystery situations, the action being further complicated by the introduction of sex psychology. There is a harassed young Puritan lieutenant in charge of neutral shipping, his chilly bourgeoise English wife, and an insatiable Greek mistress, with all the multifarious human dregs of Port Said as a background. The author himself solves the muddle by permitting the man to die heroically in an explosion aboard a ship, an unconvincing ending in an otherwise soundly written novel.

R. P. HARRISS

AMERICA LOOKS ABROAD *by Paul M. Mazur* (VIKING. $3.00)

IT IS Mr. Mazur's thesis that whether we like it or not America will face within the next ten years a surplus of imports over exports mounting to approximately five hundred mil-

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lions of dollars. If Europe is to pay us what she owes us she must eventually do so in goods. Further loans whereby she can meet interest payments on what she already owes are a temporary expedient, and continued reliance upon a high tariff to shut out the foreign imports which might adversely affect our domestic sales would invite tariff retaliation cutting down our exports, or, by forcing Europe to pay us in gold, depress foreign exchanges. This would indirectly have the same effect upon our exports by putting such a tremendous premium on the dollar that the world could no longer afford to buy our products despite all the economies of mass production.

Under these circumstances the problem is that of mitigating the effects of surplus imports, and its solution requires a rational development of economic foreign policy and rational control of the tariff. Our export trade must be so expanded that the surplus of imports will have relatively little effect upon our general business activity. We must sell more abroad in order to be able to absorb what Europe must sell here.

This is a brief recapitulation of Mr. Mazur's summary of the problem which industrial America now faces. But the value of his book is that it is not only based upon sound economic principles but that it is anything but dry and technical. It is clear and lucid. It is very readable. It sustains an interest in its subject in a way that can be credited to few books on economics, and if it were only read widely enough it would inject a great deal of common sense into public thinking on economic problems. We recommend it especially to Congress.

FOSTER RHEA DULLES

ABOUT WOMEN *by John Macy* (MORROW. $2.50)

THIS book is commended to the younger generation as an authentic record of a once prevalent state of mind. There was a time when people debated solemnly whether women had brains enough to elect members of Congress. Mr. Macy believes, apparently, that those women who before 1920 were claiming the right to be heard are among the valiantly logical band now claiming the right to be hanged. Feminists all, and he favors them—up to a point, but beyond that he thinks they may be dangerous, and in defence of his sex he coins an antonym to their title. He suggests the name "masculists". But somehow this has an unfortunate echo in a sensitive ear.

However that may be, for Mr. Macy the battle of the sexes is going strong, and in it he is not so much a standard-bearer as a spy with a tendency to linger on both sides of the fighting line. Condemned by nature to one and by inclination to another—he is surrounded by "an adoring circle of unemancipated ladies"—he is well-informed on the doings of both. To the emancipated lady he gives this tip: "If she irritates him [man], she may get a fearful set-back". One hopes Ruth Hanna McCormick will pause and listen before it is too late. The book is so packed with hints that it would be difficult to quote much with fairness either to author or prospective reader. One point may be mentioned, however, as typical of the information here to be received. Mr. Macy has discovered a virtue in what is generally regarded as a feminine failing. He advises women to cultivate their habit of talking, for is it not from their babble that babies acquire the gift of speech? "If women were not natural, instinctive, unconscious chatterers, civilization would perish and we should all grow up more stupid, ignorant and uneducated than we are." Which is saying a lot. But how harrowing to realize that noble masculine conversation is after all born of woman's chatter!

Mr. Macy predicts that we shall all hear one day from the generation which "never saw a suffrage parade and never will see one". It would be interesting to watch Mr. Macy's face as he listens.

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THE LOVE LETTERS OF JULIE DE LESPINASSE *edited by Richard Aldington* (DIAL PRESS. $5.00)

To CALL these the love letters of Julie de Lespinasse seems ironical in view of their content. They might more accurately be named letters in contempt of passion. When Julie writes to the Comte de Guibert not long before her death: "My friend, you are very lovable", she does not mean that he is either affectionate or deserving of affection. On the contrary. About the same time she is saying: "My friend, explain to me, if you can, how one can preserve the slightest affection for you, when one is certain, proof-positive certain, that what you call your affection is devoid of interest, delicacy, attentions, friendship, in short of all response to a sensitive and loving heart."

Julie had achieved that devastating certainty early in their acquaintance, yet she died loving the Count, and only a modern psychiatrist could have told her the cause of this war between her body and her brain.

Julie had a strange inheritance. She was the illegitimate child of a Comte de Vichy who in time became the son-in-law of her own mother. The mother died, trying to shield the daughter, but the Vichys were "extraordinary people", and her father made Julie governess of children whose relationship to her defies definition. Madame du Deffand, her aunt in fact though not in law, rescued her from an existence of terror and horror and took her to one which offered the companionship of the great in one of the most celebrated salons of the eighteenth century. She paid for the improvement in her position by performing duties which nowadays no one could be hired to discharge. Madame was blind and highly nervous, and she required attention night and day. But her salon attracted d'Alembert and others, and they in turn helped Julie to form a salon of her own. Her charm, her intelligence and, strangely enough, her training in self-effacement made her a new force in French society. A great Spaniard loved and would have married her despite his family, but he died; and meantime, to her lasting remorse, she had in the most literal sense "fallen for" Guibert. Given a different background and a bigger *dot*, Julie would probably have won him for a husband. In the circumstances, marriage with her would have been a misalliance—something unthinkable for a man interested primarily in his own fortunes.

The first letter is dated "Saturday evening, 15 May, 1773", and the last—just before her death—"Tuesday, 4 o'clock, May, 1776." In those three years, to quote herself, she had experienced the extremes of hell and of heaven. "There is no way I know," she says, "of acclimatizing my mind to any other temperature." There is ample evidence that Julie's reason rejected the passion she could not control. There is evidence, too, that Guibert found her mind and influence useful and her uncontrolled feeling most embarrassing at times. But perhaps the most remarkable thing about Julie as a woman is the fact that not until her death did anyone suspect the relationship between these two. The revelation would have hurt the ambitious Guibert, and she was too loyal and too loving to do him injury.

The letters show a woman of extraordinary intelligence and practical ability, whose gift for expressing passion makes one wonder why she never chose poetry as her medium.

NORAH MEADE

A HISTORY OF FRENCH LITERATURE *by Edward Dowden* (APPLETON. $1.00)

FOLLOWING Richard Garnett's *History of Italian Literature* and Fitzmaurice-Kelly's similar treatment of Spanish letters, this little volume bravely continues a series of popular introductions to the literary history of Europe. In scope it lies somewhere between Irving Babbitt's fifty-page elementary guide written for the American Library Association

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and the many familiar and trustworthy manuals for class-room reference.

The wonder is that Professor Dowden managed to crowd so much into his four hundred pages, even though his history ends with the year 1850. The few omissions, such as that of the Provençal poetry and the school of the *grands rhétoriqueurs*, require neither justification nor apology in a book destined for popular reading. As one might expect, most of the actual errors are to be found in the chapters dealing with the Middle Ages, a period which must always be handled with the greatest caution. One cannot forgive the perpetuation of the absurd Germanic origin theory of the epic, nor the arbitrary early dating of the *Chanson de Roland*. Toward the end this study abandons its impartial attitude in an unbecoming eulogy of Victor Hugo and an equally lamentable misjudgment of Stendhal. If the distinguished author of the *Life of Shelley* were now living, he would certainly not have reprinted this volume without revising some of his statements and completely rewriting his now valueless bibliography.

JUSTIN O'BRIEN

SEVEN HORIZONS *by Charles J. Finger* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $5.00)

THIS volume is neither an autobiography, in the accepted sense of the term, nor a collection of simple anecdotes and reflections, but it partakes, in a baffling manner, of the qualities of both. Perhaps one had best accept Mr. Finger's own characterization of his book when he says that "all adventure, all characters, all situations told of are true and incidental to the main thread; and the main thread traces my way through the spiritual jungle of my life, and leads to my religion, taking religion to be a way of life".

Seven Horizons is the record of an adventurous spirit. Beginning in Mayfair, in a family hedged about with mid-Victorian respectability, Charles Finger pondered the most profitable disposition of the years ahead of him. With youthful optimism he attempted the conquest of commercial London, holding three badly paid jobs at once. He was reader to a gentleman of wide and violent opinions, he was clerk in a railway freight office, and choirmaster in a church school for boys. Afire with the obvious wrongs of the world he joined himself to the group of social philosophers headed by William Morris and Cunninghame Graham, and participated in the riot at Trafalgar Square. And then, having convinced himself of the futility of living for others while he had still acquired no knowledge of himself, he decided abruptly to reorganize his life.

Severing all connections with his sentimental past he set out for Patagonia, which, of all spots on the earth recommended itself to him because on his map it was marked "unexplored". There, certainly, he could find freedom and the leisure to be an individual. He became successively a sailor, a gold miner, a hunter and a sheep herder, and found in the society of rough and lawless men the adventure he had coveted in Mayfair. After years of dangerous and care-free existence, he took stock once more. And this time he found a challenge in civilization. Bound for a career as a wheel in the economic machine, he wandered from New York to Galveston and back again, finally settling down to a job on a Southwestern railroad. Success came fairly easily to a man, still young, whose competence and self-reliance had been developed by Tierra del Fuegan life. He found himself, after a time, general manager of the road, but he discovered nothing but scorn for the shifting and stupid ethics of business, which contrasted oddly with the code he had learned among wayfaring men.

His association with William Marion Reedy opened to him his seventh horizon, a career of letters, in contemplation of which he settled down in the Ozarks to live the life which his broad experience indicated as best. *Seven Horizons* is a colorful and con-

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vincing narrative, written by a man capable of reflection and analysis. Without striving for either drama or strangeness, without lurid decorations of any kind, it is safe to say that *Seven Horizons* is the most thrilling adventure-tale Charles Finger has ever told.

MARGARET WALLACE

ENGLAND: ITS CHARACTER AND GENIUS *by Wilhelm Dibelius* (HARPERS. $5.00)

WITH admirable restraint, with unusual scope and balance in depth and breadth of treatment, with sober thoroughness, Professor Dibelius has weighed the factors that have made England. He has analysed the origins of British culture; beginning with the Gaels and Cymbri, he has traced the evolution of Britain's social organization, her religion, her political structure, her laws and her education. He has evaluated Britain's rise as a power in industry, in art and literature and in world leadership. At the threshold of the World War, England is revealed as that type of "free state" which English political theory contributed to the world, and as the embodiment of that attitude hailed as British the world over: an attitude which holds, simply, that certain things are "not done". The war itself, and the internal changes growing out of it, have by no means heralded the decline and fall of the British Empire. England's imperviousness to extreme radicalism and the soundness of the Established Church are but two of the indices which Professor Dibelius martials in support of his belief. The war, he maintains, has at the same time emphasized some of the attributes of English character he holds to be objectionable. "The egotism and materialism . . . (which) are . . . the ground tones in English life" and "the lust for power which all the outside world feels as a danger" are significant among these attributes.

"Nations, like individuals," says Professor Dibelius, "and the English Nation even more than others, require the moral control supplied by the resistance of something like an equal opponent." That opponent, he points out, is the United States. Its opposition to England is more economic than political or cultural; in the nature of its opposition lies both hope and despair. The similarity of culture suggests the possibility of an Anglo-American coöperation in the fostering of world peace; the essence of Anglo-American rivalry bespeaks a "pressure that may force England to a *rapprochement* with . . . Europe which would mean a partial reëstablishment of its political influence". And such a *rapprochement* "is the situation for the next decade; nobody will venture to prophesy further ahead".

It has taken a German to evaluate England, as it took an Englishman, not long ago, to evaluate the American commonwealth.

IRVING ASTRACHAN

FROUDE AND CARLYLE: A STUDY OF THE CONTROVERSY *by Waldo H. Dunn* (LONGMANS, GREEN. $5.00)

CARLYLE TO THREESCORE-AND-TEN *by David Alec Wilson* (DUTTON. $6.00)

WALDO H. DUNN'S *Froude and Carlyle* is the sort of work one likes to see pushed to completion, not alone for its intrinsic worth, but for its indubitable evidence that the passion for justice is not extinct in the human species. The book is a careful, minute, documented study of Froude as biographer and editor of Carlyle; and to say, as the publishers do, that its effect should be "to restore confidence in Froude's biography" is to tell only the positive side of the story. The study not only restores confidence in Froude, it also destroys one's feeling of safety in the presence of at least portions of David Alec Wilson's work on Carlyle. This compendious biography has just reached its fifth volume with *Carlyle to Threescore-and-Ten*, and to read Mr. Wilson's remarks about the Carlyle-Lady Ashburton-Mrs. Carlyle relationship

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and then turn to Professor Dunn's summary of the evidence is to have one's faith in Mr. Wilson's impartiality rudely shaken. In his present volume Mr. Wilson undertakes to dismiss any tales of hard feeling between Jane Welsh Carlyle and Lady Ashburton. He sounds very plausible, and marshals his evidence very effectively; but Professor Dunn quotes Mrs. Carlyle's own words—and conviction vanishes. In the light of *Froude and Carlyle* one's trust in Mr. Wilson's capacity to discuss the sexual relationship of the Carlyles with candor and impartiality likewise vanishes. With Mr. Wilson, it is all a mater of hero and hero-worship; he has the stigmata of the king-can-do-no-wrong school of biographer. Nevertheless, there is meat in his biography. It will not supersede Froude's four volumes, for Mr. Wilson writes nowhere near so well as Froude, but it offers a mine of material.

Professor Dunn's work leaves one with the feeling that there is nothing quite so disheartening, nothing that quite so well exhibits human nature in its pettier aspects, as the spectacle of relatives squabbling over dead men's bones. Squabble certain of them did in the case of Carlyle. And they had no worthy reason to, as Professor Dunn's evidence so patently shows. The counts urged against Froude's handling of the Carlyle material by Mary Carlyle, niece and amanuensis of the Chelsea sage, have crumbled under the acid of Professor Dunn; and Froude's good faith is vindicated. By the terms of Carlyle's will, and by all sensible interpretation of Jane Welsh Carlyle's letters and diary, and Froude's own *My Relations With Carlyle*, it is obvious that Froude discharged his duties as literary executor and biographer with taste and discretion—and even with a modicum of quite understandable Victorian timidity. It must be remembered, in any final casting of the balance, that the pamphlet on *My Relations With Carlyle*, which revealed that Carlyle had once in anger left "blue marks" on Jane's wrists and that all was not well, from a sexual standpoint, between the couple in Cheyne Row, was not published by Froude's children until the "niggling and naggling" attacks on their father demanded a convincing reply. Anyone who believes, with James Crichton-Browne, that Froude blackened Carlyle's reputation and overvalued Jane Carlyle, will be compelled to reconsider the matter when he reads *Froude and Carlyle*, or else stamp himself as one who lacks the simple capacity to read. And anyone who has taken Charles Eliot Norton's remarks about Froude's errors too seriously would do well to read Professor Dunn on that score, in which it appears that all the mistakes were not on Froude's side.

JOHN CHAMBERLAIN

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FLEDGLING FICTION

SHADOWY AND FANTASMAL

"To grasp the shadowy and fantasmal form of a book, to hold it fast, to turn it over and survey it at leisure—that is the effort of a critic of books, and it is perpetually defeated." This comment of one of the ablest writers upon the craft of fiction strikes with disquieting force the eye of one who has struggled these many days against the army of first novels which has descended on him. They come, not by handfuls but in hordes, some with loud drums beating, some attended by a train of encomiasts, a few modestly, almost stealthily, companioned only by such merit as they possess. The reviewer trembles before them—and takes refuge in a woefully mixed metaphor.

So, having confessed failure in advance, let me speak—and warily, for it is a book to tempt superlatives from the remote corners of the mind—of Claire Spencer's *Gallows' Orchard* (Cape & Smith. $2.50). It is good to come upon so fine an achievement as this; it is good to encounter delicacy and fire and a lyric unity of mood united in a tragedy which wounds the reader into a rapture of pity by simple virtue of the author's own passionate immersion in her tale. There are books which make each reader an accomplice in the events of which they treat: which leap through print and paper to become present happenings in the mind. Of these is *Gallows' Orchard*.

But when I come to tell you of the book, I am at a loss. I can tell you of its mood, of how skilfully the dominant note is sounded at the beginning with the sudden vivid figure of Effie Gallows standing on a hilltop awaiting in contempt her bridegroom. Indeed it is a succession of pictures at the first: the wedding of Effie and Ernest Weir with the motley guests, the threat of catastrophe, the sudden outburst of hatred in Mistress Weir, the groom's mother. Then comes the fair, and one sees hatred climbing higher, one knows the catastrophe to be near at hand; and out of a whirling mist of figures a handful emerges clearly: Effie, the doomed woman and her niggling husband; the stranger, the fiddler, the minister and John Gallantly who tells the tale—all men who love her, all victims with her in a common disaster. It is at the fair that hatred breaks into tragedy, and Effie is left with a murdered husband and a child too near to birth and the scorn and animosity of her neighbors. But what follows is more difficult to describe. The swift flowering of malevolence, the deadly inexorable progress of ill fortune, the tragic end that comes almost as a relief—these are to be witnessed by the reader, not vicariously experienced.

All this the reader does witness, with a convincing sense of participation, by virtue of the author's intensity of vision and her apparent artlessness. It is John Gallantly who tells the story, not Claire Spencer; and as he tells it you become with him a spellbound actor in a cruel but exalted drama. You see its people as he sees them in a clear yet disordered light; you share his helplessness and in some measure his torment. It is only at the end, in the heart-broken quietude of the last scene that this curious union is dissolved, and that one may pay tribute to the disciplined art which procured it.

Just how Miss Spencer achieves this effect I cannot say, and I am not certain that it matters. I for one am content to respect it.

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It was no beating of drums that led me to look into *The Trader's Wife* by Jean Kenyon Mackenzie (Coward-McCann. $2.50), but rather the dignity of its dress and a memory of excellent things that had been said of her other books, books which were reputed to tell of life in Africa as a wise and sensitive missionary had observed it. I was amply rewarded; for it is at once a picture and a sombre lovely music, the tale of a woman of a century ago who went to Africa as the wife of a former slave trader and found the land stronger than her spirit. It is so slight, so simple a tale, that one wonders how it can lay so large a weight upon the imagination and the memory. Indeed, it is no novel at all, if you like definitions, but rather a continuous picture that grows and alters as you observe it, so that you are aware of its color and its meaning by a sense more subtle and immediate than that of sight. And it is not any fault of the book that the trader's wife and Harford, the trader, do not come alive within its pages: they walk, luminous shadows, through a wilderness in which cruelty and fear and death make a distant terrifying sound; and in them all experience, all emotion, seem remote. This is pictorial art of a high order, made in a dramatic pattern but —and I think intentionally—ignoring all dramatic effect. Here are words woven into a design of unostentatious but rare beauty.

There is little design and no beauty in Edward Dahlberg's *Bottom Dogs* (Simon & Schuster. $2.50), which comes to us with a rumbling of very big drums indeed. Here "life" is served to us in almost too ample portions. Here reek and stench and human swinishness, all that is drab and pitiable and foul in man, are brought together as the stuff of a drama of ignoble living. It is difficult to say what merits lie in this brutal and hopeless book. Its candor impresses, but whether with conviction or a sense of outrage I cannot determine. But to me the image of Lorry the outcast, the wastrel, is not wholly real, and never affecting. His mother, the lady barber, with her aches and gullibility and disordered viscera, is a human and pitiful figure; and a few of the minor persons are momentarily alive. But Lorry himself eludes the author, even as, at the end, his story escapes its bounds.

Bottom Dogs is written in the vernacular of the class with which it deals, a vigorous uncouth speech, not always maintained, whose flat cadence adds not a little to the drab forcefulness of the book. Yet here, too, just as he does in the unrelieved spiritual squalor of his characters, I think the author exaggerates. It is difficult to believe in people whose actions and speech are wholly without dignity: they may exist but they are never credible and therefore do not matter. That I think is the chief fault of the book; it is an exercise in unlovely virtuosity, skilful enough but somehow unimportant.

It is a relief to turn from the fetor of Mr. Dahlberg's pages to the Victorian fragrance of *Wanderer's End*, the first—and unhappily the last—novel from the pen of the late Dennis Cleugh (Doubleday, Doran. $2.50). Here reality is flouted in the grand manner; all is pleasant artifice and sentiment and just a bit (perhaps just a bit too much) of whimsy. Yet I ask you to admire the accomplished manner in which Mr. Cleugh marshalled his incidents and his people together. From the moment, so early in the first chapter, when the perhaps too quaintly named Don Paradise is found unconscious in the snow, and adopted by the preposterous Minerva and her spouse, until the last paragraph, the author never faltered in the manipulation of his story. It is skilful stage direction, no more; but it is such stage direction as Mr. Cleugh's models, the great Victorians, employed. And unreal and a trifle absurd as the whole of it is, it is excellent story telling.

I was about to remark that good story telling seems possible only on Victorian lines when my eye chanced to fall on Granville Toogood's *Huntsman in the Sky* (Brewer & Warren. $2.50). Here, too, is an excellently

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told story, and here, too, in spite of occasional lapses, are sound observation, good dialogue and some really effective drama. Mr. Toogood has built his story upon large lines: he traces the spiritual and physical adventures of his hero in detail but at a rapid pace, and he continues, in spite of his consistently serious intent, to be continuously amusing.

Novels about musicians, about artists of any sort, are too often yearning and affected. This one is not. Bartram Garrison, is a convincing figure of a man in whom some vivifying element of genius has been omitted. His sense of defeat, his slow emotional release into self-expression, are effectively presented. If he fails of reality in any respect, it is as a lover. His infatuation for the misty and inhuman Elaine is never entirely credible.

Such books as *Huntsman in the Sky* are of the gentry of fiction. Urbane and intelligent, they atone for a lack of depth by the excellence of their manners. But I think, and I would be almost tempted to wager, that Mr. Toogood's future work will be much more than polished. Already he writes well.

An interesting yet arid novel is R. D. Dorthy's *Above and Below* (Holt. $2.50), in which the author presents a climactic moment in the emotional lives of three separate groups of people, by the now familiar but still perilous device of exploring the inner consciousness of certain of her characters. The weakness of this method lies in the fact that the novelist, occupied with mental processes, too often loses sight of the nice differences of character. In spite of the conscious shift of focus, the quality of feeling remains unchanged: rather, the character of the person whose point of view is being expounded, is not clearly conveyed to the reader. In consequence there is almost always in such books an element of monotony which no dramatic effect can entirely eliminate: feeling at whatever pitch of intensity is disembodied and evokes no response in the reader. *Above and Below* is no exception: the reader is insulated from emotional contact with the people of the story, and even the final scene, admirably conceived as it is, fails in its effect.

There is little enough to be said of the varied group of books which remains. *Saint Udo* by Richard L. Masten (Houghton Mifflin. $2.50) is an attempt to combine the costume romance with the ironic legend. Some humor, some tenderness have gone to its making, but the author lacks mastery of his style and of his narrative. . . . *Pistols in the Morning* (John Day. $2.00), by Donald Barr Chidsey, the author of those effervescent biographies, *Marlborough: The Portrait of a Conqueror*, and *Bonnie Prince Charlie*, is a dashing yarn told with a very dashing air which I found enjoyable. I like gentlemanly gamblers with wills of steel and hearts of gold; I like the old Mississippi steamboat days and all the trappings of American high life before the Civil War, and Mr. Chidsey has employed all these in the concoction of an entertaining romance. . . . Laurance Maynard, who writes of the underworld with personal knowledge, offers good melodrama in *The Pig is Fat* (Farrar & Rinehart. $2.00), the story of a boy whose evolution into Cokey Ben, dope peddler and outcast, is pitifully studied. An eye less pointedly turned upon theatric effect would have seen more of valid drama in this story. . . . *Fever Pitch* by Frank Waters (Liveright. $2.50) is a perfervid story of the thirst for desert gold in a Mexican dancing girl and what it did to an American engineer. Some vivid descriptions of torture in the desert fail to lift this book out of the slough of the unreal. . . . Sarah Atherton has written in *Blow, Whistles, Blow!* (Brewer & Warren. $2.50) an earnest and uninteresting novel of life in and about a Pennsylvania colliery. . . . And John Beames has produced an equally uninspired novel dealing with Canadian pioneers of the twentieth century, *An Army Without Banners* (Little Brown. $2.50), a novel over which the shadow of the late Horatio Alger hovers approvingly.

GUY HOLT

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THE BOOKMAN'S MONTHLY SCORE

COMPILED BY FRANK PARKER STOCKBRIDGE, LIFE MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION, IN COÖPERATION WITH THE PUBLIC LIBRARIES OF AMERICA

Notice having been taken in these casual comments of the disappearance of Mr. Dakin's *Mrs. Eddy* from the monthly score after an all too brief sojourn here, it is but fair to note that library borrowers are again reading this searching biography in numbers sufficiently large to bring it into the ranks of currently popular literature. The exposure of the methods used in the campaign against this book seems to have emboldened librarians to put it again in circulation, and certainly has stimulated the demand for it. Aside from that, the most noteworthy feature of this month's score is the rise to popularity of Bertrand Russell's *Marriage and Morals*. And that, after all, was to have been expected, since it treats of a phase of life upon which, as these records have demonstrated time and time again, the most earnest search for new light persists among the reading masses. —F. P. S.

NOVELS

1. ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT	*Erich Maria Remarque*	LITTLE, BROWN
2. WHITEOAKS OF JALNA	*Mazo de la Roche*	LITTLE, BROWN
3. A FAREWELL TO ARMS	*Ernest Hemingway*	SCRIBNER'S
4. HUDSON RIVER BRACKETED	*Edith Wharton*	APPLETON
5. THE GOOD COMPANIONS	*J. B. Priestley*	HARPERS
6. ROPER'S ROW	*Warwick Deeping*	KNOPF
7. CORONET *	*Manuel Komroff*	COWARD-MCCANN
8. ALL OUR YESTERDAYS *	*H. M. Tomlinson*	HARPERS
9. GOD HAVE MERCY ON US	*William T. Scanlon*	HOUGHTON MIFFLIN
10. A LANTERN IN HER HAND	*Bess Streeter Aldrich*	APPLETON
11. YOUNG MAN OF MANHATTAN *	*Katharine Brush*	FARRAR & RINEHART
12. BURNING BEAUTY	*Temple Bailey*	PENN

GENERAL

1. NEW WORLDS TO CONQUER	*Richard Halliburton*	BOBBS-MERRILL
2. THE ART OF THINKING	*Ernest Dimnet*	SIMON & SCHUSTER
3. HENRY THE EIGHTH	*Francis Hackett*	LIVERIGHT
4. GRANDMOTHER BROWN'S HUNDRED YEARS	*Harriet Connor Brown*	LITTLE, BROWN
5. A PREFACE TO MORALS	*Walter Lippmann*	MACMILLAN
6. THE TRAGIC ERA	*Claude Bowers*	HOUGHTON MIFFLIN
7. MARRIAGE AND MORALS	*Bertrand Russell*	LIVERIGHT
8. THE UNIVERSE AROUND US	*Sir James Jeans*	MACMILLAN
9. JULY '14	*Emil Ludwig*	PUTNAM
10. MRS. EDDY	*Edwin Franden Dakin*	SCRIBNER'S
11. STRANGE INTERLUDE	*Eugene O'Neill*	LIVERIGHT
12. THE MANSIONS OF PHILOSOPHY	*Will Durant*	SIMON & SCHUSTER

* *This title has not previously appeared in the Monthly Score.*

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CRITICISM IN AMERICA

(Continued from page 256)

his best. Bereft of his theories he sinks to even lower depths of fatuity.

The traditional critics have failed, says Brooks, but "they never pretended to be on terms of intimacy with the real conditions of our life". This claim has been made by the pragmatists, and indeed their influence has been universal: "their philosophy has been the formulation, the rationalization of the whole spirit of American life at least since the Spanish war". Then he launches into one of his familiar strings of whining complaints: "And observe the condition in which we now are: sultry, flaccid, hesitant, not knowing what we want and incapable of wanting anything very much, certainly not in love with our life, . . . inclined as ever to substitute monetary for real values, and to stand in mortal fear of letting loose the spiritual appetites that impede our pursuit of a neat, hygienic, and sterile success. What, in fact, *is* the note of our society today? A universal tepidity, it seems to me, the faded offspring of the Puritan hatred of human nature, which makes perhaps a majority of our kindly fellow-countrymen seem quite incapable of living, loving, thinking, dreaming, or hoping with any degree of passion or intensity".

This is a typical Brooksian outburst, with the usual fancy mingling of the true, the half-true, the false and the purely idiosyncratic. True: inclined to over-emphasize money. Half-true: fearful of letting loose appetites, incapable of living passionately; these being merely the anti-Philistine way of pointing out the simple fact that most people are ordinary. False: the Puritan hatred of human nature; the Puritans did overemphasize human depravity, but to make this exaggeration stand for the whole Puritan complex is to falsify it, and to do so for the purpose I have previously described, rejecting the Puritan insight along with the Puritan excesses. The purely idiosyncratic: all the bitter and gloomy words which describe nothing but the author's frame of mind.

But now notice how he disposes of pragmatism, which has not been able to prevent this frightful condition: "Not content with remaining a method, it has . . . attempted to fill the place which poetry alone can fill adequately. . . . That is to say, it has assumed the right to formulate the aims of life and the values by which these aims are tested, aims and values which, we are led by history to believe, can be effectively formulated only by individual minds not in harmony with the existing fact, but in revolt against it". In other words, the pragmatists must be rejected because they are not rebellious poets! —James and Dewey are too much like philosophers and not enough like Shelley! Not only are poets the unacknowledged legislators of the world, but anyone who attempts to study ends and values by the methods of philosophy is simply out of bounds! This is what "we are led by history to believe".

But let us return to Brooks on the upholders of tradition. Now the writings of Paul Elmer More and Irving Babbitt might be defined briefly as sound sense backed by sound scholarship, presented in clear and forceful language. They are not difficult to understand for a reader of ordinary intelligence and something like a college education. Still easier to understand is the work of W. C. Brownell and Stuart Sherman, two men who were in many respects related to More and Babbitt, though a full alliance had ceased some years before their deaths. Four masters of expression dealing in age-old ideas —anyone fit to take part in cultural discussions ought to be able to understand them, however much he might differ with them in the end. And that, in brief, is the indictment

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of American criticism that stares out of the facts at the observer of our literary history during the past fifteen years: our critics were functioning on such a low plane of ideas that they could not comprehend a body of work on the ordinary level of criticism, and, grasping only that it was hostile to their own views, laid about them with whatever weapons they could improvise to prove it ludicrous or fiendish.

We have looked down from the comparatively lofty height of ordinary sense and seen H. L. Mencken circling in the dingy, stuffy little province of ideas where a man is considered intellectually incompetent if he is educated, where Friedrich Nietzsche is counted a master of wisdom, where respectability is a badge of shame. We have seen Randolph Bourne still caught at the end of his short life in that pretty, petty web of fevered adolescence in which the great issue is the assault of Radiant Youth on Crabbed Age, where Maeterlinck and Dewey are considered sages, where the pseudo-humanities of sociology and psychology are put above the true humanities. We have seen Van Wyck Brooks morosely spinning out similar obsessions into complex skeins of garbled history, synthetic psychology, preposterous theory, and blank nonsense. It was inevitable that the attempt of all three men to "destroy" the work of the older critics should have risen to no higher level than we have seen in the cases of Mencken and Bourne. The similar effort of Brooks was the climax of this first wave of the assault of the new men. It gained in effectiveness by being part of the ingenious "philosophy" of American cultural history with which Brooks's rhetoric was infecting a whole generation of floundering young men.

Mencken's warfare on the professors and Bourne's distress at the older generation's refusal to take romantic youth at its own valuation find an expression in Brooks: "The professors of American literature can, after all, offer very little to the creators of it. There is a vendetta between the two generations, and the older generation seems to delight in cutting off the supplies of the younger. What actuates the old guard in our criticism and their energetic following in the university world is apparently no sort of desire to fertilize the present, but rather to shame the present with the example of the past". This was all he could make of their plea for standards and their mighty efforts to build up a body of work that would enable other young men to bear up against the onrushing currents that were engulfing Brooks. His plea to the older men was that "the living forces about them deserve a little sympathetic attention". "It behooves them to spring loyally to the support of groping minds that bear the mark of sincerity and promise." His quest was for leaders—but when the men obviously equipped for leadership turned out to despise his nonsensical ideas and to refuse to flatter the bright young hot-heads merely because they were groping, sincere and promising, he could not find strong enough terms to express his resentment.

His language was seldom stronger than when objecting to strong language on the other side. Like Bourne before him, and many critics since, he was extremely uncomfortable when conservative spokesmen expressed themselves with forthright vigor. The example Brooks presents of More's "objectionable" language is a puzzling one. Instead of being a harsh judgment on some favorite subject of Brooks's, it is merely a condemnation of one aspect of yellow journalism; not at all important, and so far as I can see, quite unexceptionable in sense and in tone. However, Brooks comments "Now, really, whatever the provocations of the yellow press, can we imagine a worse piece of literary breeding than that? Yet it can almost be called Mr. More's habitual tone whenever, leaving the charmed circle of literary ideas, he deals with modern society. Far from being reasonable, disinterested, and humane, his note is one of nag-

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ging, pettish and one would almost say vulgar exasperation; he betrays a tendency to break out on every occasion into promiscuous abuse".

He takes a cue from Bourne and asks how we can be expected to be converted to the classic discipline when its spokesmen "are so singularly ill-nurtured"—as to condemn sordid aspects of yellow journalism! But this is not really the basis of his objection, as we shall see—and as can readily be guessed. But the most amusing thing about the accusation of reckless language and explosions of abuse is that it occurs in a passage in which More is called "our chief exponent of the *intellectualist* position", the case for which rests "wholly on the assumption that literature ought to spring not from the emotions but from the intellect". Now of course the absurdity here is not More's or Babbitt's or Brownell's, but Brooks's. The older men made no such assumption as Brooks ascribes to them; that is merely the familiar assumption of the sloppily emotional romantic on having his emotions subjected to any inspection of the intellect. So that when Brooks reverses the opposition he has himself created and retorts "Mr. More's emotional life, as far as his writings exhibit, is just as crude and untempered as the intellectual life of the younger generation which he attacks", the victim was probably less than crushed.

But by this circuitous route Brooks is leading up to his main point—the point which shows that yellow journalism was not the feature of "modern society" in which More's strong language bothers him. "He has not been able to feel human values finely because to have done so would have been to upset his whole faith in a society based not upon the creative but upon the acquisitive instincts of men, a society ruled over by the 'natural aristocracy' of economic power". Now the reader sees where he is being led—straight back to Union Square, from which Brooks's mind never wanders very far, however Parnassian or Academic his discourse may sound. He continues:

"Mr. More is simply a belated pioneer, with all the repressed impulses, the fundamental limitations, the exaggerated antipathies that belong to the pioneer type, extended and subtilized in the sphere of the intellect alone. Turn from his philosophical and literary essays, in which he is able to be humane at large, to his essays on social and economic themes, and see how quickly he lets the cat out of the bag." And how does he let out the cat? Simply by recording his belief in private property! Brooks quotes a sentence in which More asserts vigorously his conviction that property must remain what it has always been, the basis of civilization; that it is one of those essential and eternal human institutions, like the family and religion, which have a value for civilization beyond the value of individual lives. You can almost see Brooks's socialistic shiver. Do not fail to notice the beautiful theory—forced on Brooks by his whole scheme of American cultural history—that belief in property is only a hang-over from pioneering, and that such a belief automatically cripples the emotional life. One must admire at least the consistency of a formula that is carried through to the point of maintaining that the institution of property was invented around Massachusetts Bay; perhaps not far from the spot where those gloomy Puritans devised the doctrine of original sin.

Nothing illustrates better the general chuckle-headedness of the criticism that has surrounded the humanists than the subsequent history of this contribution to the myth, that there is something particularly heinous and inhuman about their attitude toward property. In Bourne and Brooks such a feeling was almost understandable; at least with them it was based on strong emotions which in turn were connected with deep convictions, since they had faced the real issue involved in property and had made their choice. There are only two ways to

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regard property: either it is the basis of civilization, or it is, in Proudhon's phrase, theft; either its rights must be protected, or its rights must be abrogated by communization. Since More had chosen the ancient conception of property, and Bourne and Brooks were convinced the new conception was the only decent one, it is perhaps natural that Bourne should have contributed the rhetorical flourish quoted earlier about More "putting property rights above human rights" (as though a man working for what he considers the ends of civilization was not regarding human rights!), and that Brooks should have tried to "blast" More's emotional equipment by invoking the acquisitive-pioneer formula. But most of the numerous critics who have used this line of attack in the meantime have clearly not done so from the basis of genuine conviction, but have merely been glad to borrow some strong emotional rhetoric with which to slur the "enemy".

But what is perhaps the weirdest use to which Brooks puts his omnibus formula remains to be noted. He rightly saw that there was a crucial point involved in the profound study of European, especially French, literature made by the older critics and in their insistence on the need of similar cultural standards in our country. But Brooks could not admit that striving to build up cultural traditions comparable to those of France, say, was the logical and only possible solution of the American difficulties. For to do so would have been to admit not only the value of methods used in countries where "competition" and "acquisition" are still allowed, but the value of the principle of aristocracy, since high cultures have always been associated with aristocracies. And Brooks, as we have seen, was not viewing the American problem as one of creating leaders to form a cultural aristocracy, but as one of socializing industry and removing competition. Therefore when Brownell pointed out that we used to have in this country a cultural aristocracy, "a class, not numerous but fairly defined, possessed in abundance of serious knowledge, high accomplishment and refined taste, the class, precisely, called by Molière *les honnêtes gens*", and argued for the need of such a class now, Brooks realized that this was a direct challenge to his whole contention.

He could not admit that our New England cultural leaders presented a worthy ideal, since by his formula they were part of a bad social system inherited from the Puritan-pioneers and now grown worse. His efforts to extricate himself from this quandary provide an amazing exhibition of pure Brooks. He devotes half of his essay on "Our Critics" to it, and involves himself in the most excruciating extremities of pseudo-subtlety, tortured metaphor, feeble analogy and wild rhetoric. There is much chatter about "organic societies", "fused and unified social masses", and the futility of trying to adopt a foreign culture bodily. But for his main solution of his difficulty he falls back on his invaluable stand-by, his acquisitive-competitive-creative rigmarole. He simply denies that the cultural community of our New England efflorescence was comparable to the society of Molière's seventeenth-century France. For there was an element in France we did not have, the court, which made all the difference. Why? "Because the court, removed as it was from the influences of the marketplace, kept alive in France the free, the non-acquisitive, in short the creative conception of life", etc. Is that not simple and beautiful? The notion that the French court served the same purpose that socialism would here must certainly be an original contribution to historical sociology. Oddly enough, Brooks seems not to have recommended an American monarchy.

There have been no more persistent elements of the anti-humanist myth than two allied charges to which Brooks gave forceful expression: that More and Babbitt have been irrelevant to the needs of their time, and that they have not been practical. Both notions come out of the abysmal distance separating

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the myth-makers from the objects of their attack. This is amusingly acknowledged by Brooks in commenting on quotations from Babbitt and Brownell to the effect that the general tendency of the past hundred years has been toward expansion and revolt. Said Brooks: "To us who are so much in the thick of things that we cannot see the forest for the trees, statements of this kind are all but unintelligible. They seem like anathemas delivered in some half-forgotten sacred language to a people that has begun to stammer in a vernacular of its own".

In that we have, in two sentences, the story of the last fifteen years of American criticism: the "leaders" of the younger generation unable to get within hailing distance of the most ordinary sense and the most elementary knowledge, and berating the spokesmen of sense and information for remaining in ivory towers or dim regions of abstractions. They scorned Babbitt and More for having nothing to say on their problems—Babbitt and More were aiming every word right at them. The fact that the older critics were opposed to all the doctrines that were intoxicating the flaming youths is no excuse for the young men's attitude of blind scorn. Never is a man in closer or more vital contact with his age than when he is attacking it in every detail. If the young men had been mentally keen and strenuous they would have recognized the necessity of grappling with oppositional men of the stature of More and Babbitt, in order to know better their own minds and their own times, and they would have been thankful that such men existed.

The plea to the older men to "descend into the thick of reality", as Brooks put it, meaning to engage in diurnal criticism and above all to comment on the latest figures to come to public notice, is a revealing one. In part it is merely the desire for a "good show", for something more "readable" than slower and more elaborate criticism. In part it comes from the journalist's conviction of the supremacy of his art. But principally it is based on a dire misunderstanding of the nature of the problem confronting the serious critic in this country. Do the carpers really suppose that Babbitt and More could have advanced their purpose by seeking to influence the figures of the modern American literature as they appeared? Does it seem likely, for example, that if they had labored long and patiently over Theodore Dreiser, reviewing his books with loving care, perhaps getting into correspondence with him, sending him text-books of elementary composition, parsing his sentences for him, telling him how the world is made, that they would have improved his style or altered that narrow, sordid, stupid clutter of misinformation and prejudice called his philosophy? Even his friend Mencken has recorded that he couldn't budge Dreiser in years of effort, Mencken who spoke Dreiser's own language of journalism, shared most of his notions, and brought to the task all the advantages of being an enraptured hero-worshipper.

Does anyone imagine that Mencken, apparently cock-sure from the cradle, would have benefited by the most assiduous tutelage of More and Babbitt? Their books were under his nose from his early twenties—but his idea of a critic was Percival Pollard, James G. Huneker, or any trivial Bohemian journalist with a smattering of back-stairs gossip about artists. When Stuart Sherman got after him in one of the shrewdest and most devastating analyses ever penned, did he profit by it? The only effect was that references to "a pathetic Iowa critic" began to adorn his splutters of indignation at every sign of intelligence or decency and his spasms of joy at every contribution to the literature of anti-respectability.

Or take the case of Van Wyck Brooks himself. At the age of twenty-nine he wrote a book on H. G. Wells. It was a highly ridiculous book, based on the bizarre notion that Wells has "played toward his own epoch a part very similar to that played by Matthew Arnold"; a notion amplified by the as-

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sertion that "socialism is itself a natural outgrowth of those 'best things that have been thought and said in the world' ". Brooks's book inspired Stuart Sherman to write one of the most brilliant essays ever written in America. In his rich, urbane, ironic style, with thorough knowledge of the whole range of ideas involved in the study of both Wells and Arnold, he not only demolished Brooks's thesis, but at the same time demolished Wells as thoroughly as that prophet of confusion will ever need demolishment. The study provoked from Wells his famous squawk about the *Nation*: "a vain, garrulous and prosperous female of uncertain age, and still more uncertain temper, with unfounded pretensions to intellectuality and an ideal of refinement of the most negative description . . . the Aunt Errant of Christendom". That was what was to be expected in the circumstances from Wells. But if Brooks had been to the slightest degree open to common sense, if it had not been kept by his fanatical obsessions down in a bottomless deep of puerility, he would have been given pause by Sherman's study; he would have realized that his own ideas had been overhauled in the light of another body of ideas which, to say the least, closely concerned his own at every point, and that the examination had been made by a man vividly aware of what Brooks was saying and anxious to illuminate him.

But Brooks's comment on Sherman's "guerilla warfare with his younger contemporaries" was a complaint that Sherman never "displayed anything that could be called an interest in them or any desire to find out what they are seeking"! The reason for Brooks's obtuseness soon appears, in the manner in which he "proves" that Sherman was not worth considering as a critic. Yes, my dear reader, you are right: it was because Sherman had not been able to liberate himself from "the acquisitive-non-creative programme" of our society. "Professor Sherman's opposition is sterile, because it lies outside the creative sphere altogether. Talk as he may of humanism, his humanism is avowedly based upon that of Mr. More"—and Mr. More, of course, is quite impossible, because he believes in property. "An innate conviction that experience itself is vain and that the acquisitive instincts have and ought to have the right of way desiccates the mind of the man who might have been Young America's dearest and most stimulating enemy and has led him to write a book that futilizes not merely the contemporary literature with which it deals but all literature whatsoever." One of the chapters in the futilizing book was Sherman's very thorough futilizing of Brooks and Wells.

Babbitt and More had more important work to do than to try to stem the advance of the shallow and misguided generation that has dominated American letters for twenty years. That would have been equivalent to a teacher's spending all his time on the dunce in his class because he was popular with his fellows. They were too "practical" for that. They were aware that the surface events were symptoms of deep-lying causes that could only be reached by the slow, laborious route of education, of preparing leaders. Just how practical they were is already unmistakably apparent to even the least sympathetic eye. Mencken has berated More for being aloof, not concerned with the "literature that is in being". Mencken and More published their first books of criticism about the same time, 1904-05. Compare the ensuing groups of books. In More you find the finest body of critical work not only of our day, but of our country, and perhaps of our language; a body of work which by the example of its construction alone furnishes an immense stimulus to our cultural growth, and which in itself is a liberal education, forcing the reader to stretch his mind powerfully to compass it, whether to agree or to disagree. Then look at Mencken's volumes of trivial chatter, of cheap burlesque, of stale Bohemian polemics, of salutes to forgotten geniuses, of

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tirades on forgotten dignitaries, of abortive scholarship—going out of print as fast as he can write new ones, corpses strewn along a petty and futile career. "It is certainly remarkable," said Brooks of the older critics, "this apparently general determination not to be practical." Brooks and Babbitt published their first books of criticism in 1908. Babbitt's five monumental volumes have been steadily making their way through key individuals to the center of our educational and literary worlds until they have become the energizing force behind the most significant movement that our time has seen; while already Brooks's books have become but curious documents of a curious period, with the end of their influence already in sight.—Practicality is not summed up by the ability to excite for a few years the raw, the gullible, the too-eager, the ignorant.

In leaving Van Wyck Brooks we may note his final word on the humanists: "Not guides and friends of the creative spirit but incredulous pedagogues by necessity, they have been really driven to destroy in others the poet that has died in themselves. Of their 'humanism' let this be the merciful epitaph". Mr. Brooks was a little premature. But the epitaph of his own criticism is long overdue: A purblind, morbid, theory-ridden metaphorician, in the name of creation he led a multitude into the wastes of sterility and confusion.

IV

The years 1917-1918 were the richest in providing the language, the tone, the terms by which the old ways were pushed aside to make a bright new world. The scattered forces of insurrection began to come together, arousing the mutual enthusiasm that gave the effect of a movement and developing the whole set of ideas which were to be carried to triumph in the next few years. Before then, the leaders of the coming revolt had been working in isolation, not knowing or failing to recognize one another. Thus Mencken had greeted Van Wyck Brooks's *America's Coming-of-Age* with this:

"Despite the war with its blest reduction of all forms of the uplift to absurdity, the manufacturing of 'inspirational' book continues unabated in our fair confederation. . . . *America's Coming-of-Age*, by Van Wyck Brooks, instructs the rest of us in our opportunities in the manner of the *New Republic*. . . . I see many more such hortatory and pontifical books. . . . I turn from these pale blossoms of the uplift to the gorgeous rose-gardens of Lord Dunsany—to the incomparable fantasies of his *Book of Wonder* and the exquisite miniatures of his *Fifty-One Tales*. Dunsany doesn't give a hoot for the uplift; he is not a forward-looker. He is something infinitely better; he is something immeasurably more valuable than all the forward-lookers at present unhung; he is a first rate artist."

Brooks remained an isolated figure until he was drawn into the alert group around the *Seven Arts* magazine, along with Randolph Bourne and numerous others who made the magazine the most representative and probably the most influential of the period. In the present account its influence was decisive: before its founding in 1917 the antagonists of More and Babbitt had scarcely made themselves heard; by the time of its suspension the following year the older critics were bywords of infamy among the whole generation of young talents clamoring at the gates of power. Brooks's *Letters and Leadership* essays had appeared in it, and some of Bourne's essays. Between them they had provided a complete outline for the myth of the harsh, arrogant, Puritanical, plutocratic school of critics. From that time on willing and clever hands did not lack to add the developments necessary to elevate the myth into the accepted opinion.

The *Seven Arts* seems in retrospect to have been at the center of the movement, but the *New Republic*, the *Smart Set* and the reconstructed *Dial*, all with larger publics, were

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quickly taking the cue. The tone and the purpose of the literary criticism in all four of the magazines became remarkably similar. In part this was the result of isolated *revoltés* discovering one another, and uniting in the lowest common denominator of a common hate. Voices that had been crying, as they thought, in private wildernesses suddenly found that they were part of a chorus before whom the wilderness was visibly fading away. But in large part the cohesion of the new forces can be ascribed to Stuart Sherman, then doing the best writing of his career and summing up, in so far as he represented the views of More and Babbitt, everything the new generation was opposing.

Sherman's book of the end of 1917, *On Contemporary Literature*, the book that Brooks found so futilizing, was an endless source of irritation to the rebels, and provided them with endless occasions to declare their independence of the ugly, outworn, pernicious viewpoint it contained for them. "The source of Mr. Sherman's criticism is American correctness, the bloodless correctness to which New England has given its wintry flavor", said Francis Hackett, whose trenchant, ready pen made his transplanted Irish anti-respectability a powerful stimulus to the movement, in Chicago before 1914 and then as the chief critic of the *New Republic*. This mingling of insurgency with condescension was his particular gift to the times, carried on after him by Ernest Boyd and Mary Colum. Sherman and More were bearing the brunt of the attack up to this point, Babbitt's power not having been recognized. Even when Babbitt published his terrific onslaught on the moderns, *Rousseau and Romanticism*, in 1919, they were slow to see its significance. The book went almost unnoticed, outside of the learned journals, although the *Dial* countered with this: "Wiser readers will avoid this undiscerning and priggish criticism of romantic genius, imagination, morality, love, irony, and melancholy. Others should be warned that the author's classicism is of the neo-pseudo-bluestocking variety, that his spirit is that of the smuggest puritanism (his favorite word is 'decorum'), and that his scholarship is the one-sided erudition of doctrinaire propaganda".

The years 1919-20 saw a tightening and speeding up all along the line among the new forces, with the sense of victory in the air. They were being augmented by the first crop of converts to the cause. After 1915 it was not hard for a young man, in only a few months of reading the new writers, to be swept into the movement. Thousands had the experience. Many of them were reaching their middle twenties at the turn of the decade and beginning to make their way in journalism and publishing. The myth of the total depravity of the conservative critics had taken them in completely, and they added their shrill impudence to its propagation. Youngsters who had never read a word of More's made it a habit to work scurrilous references to him into their slightest book reviews.

Mencken finally got around to reviewing a book of More's in 1919, *With the Wits*. "Dull stuff," he pronounced it; "correct and virtuous, but deadly dull. He spends too much time collecting information and too little time digesting it". He found More "obsessed by the problem of conduct" and "conceiving the primary aim of all books to be hortatory"; to the end Mencken will apparently believe that the men whose morals he opposes are "moralists", while he and others with a different set of morals are operating in some realm far above mere morals. But Mencken knew how to praise, too: "Only once in the book does he descend to downright imbecility . . . His Shelburne Essays deserve to go on". Two years later, in reviewing *A New England Group and Others*, Mencken came upon "a strange politeness to the late F. W. Nietzsche", and went on to add the hilarious conclusion to the tale of his encounter with More's study of Nietzsche:

"Ten years ago More had many harsh

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things to say about Nietzsche, in whom he discerned a lingering romantic, by Wagner out of the Chopin waltzes; now he salutes and almost embraces the brute. Well, perhaps it is not so astonishing, after all. Wasn't it Nietzsche who said 'Be hard!' And isn't this, at bottom, the substance of the Morean aesthetic [sic]? More, I suspect, misunderstood Nietzsche in those first days (as, indeed, I presumed to tell him at the time); now he knows better. At all events, he gives the Prussian Antichrist a very courtly bow, and even forgets to blame him for the war". The truth was, of course, not that More had changed, but that Mencken was merely demonstrating what I noted above, his complete failure to understand More's original essay.

By 1921 the new movement was thoroughly established, and the old leaders were considered thoroughly discredited. Even Stuart Sherman had been jarred by the repeated blows and was beginning his long, spectacular descent from the point where he was showing the possibility of becoming a lesser Paul Elmer More to the point where he could barely be distinguished, except by superior writing skill, from Henry Seidel Canby or even Carl Van Doren. By this time no words were thought too harsh to apply to the older critics; the myth of their fiendishness had been so well established that their opponents merely ranted recklessly. In fact signs were appearing that the myth had succeeded just in time: a little more, and it would have suffered the fate of all such propaganda myths if they are not quickly accepted: forced to continue expanding in order to live, they blow up. They pass the bounds of the credible, and so defeat their own purpose. But this fate the anti-humanist fate did not suffer until its reincarnation in the last few months.

Francis Hackett's review of *A New England Group and Others* (1921) illustrated the extremity to which the critics had come in finding methods to freshen up the attack. "It was men like Paul Elmer More who gave the hemlock to Socrates", was his conclusion. Most of his piece was devoted do damning More because "his temperament and his habit of mind are the same as a conservative banker's". Another sample of this indiscriminate, wild-eyed kind of abuse was provided by Ernest Boyd the following year, when he detected "insincerity" and "pose" in the fact that More had spent two years in solitude with books before starting his life's work. Boyd's grotesque attempts to deal with established writers in *Literary Blasphemies* absolve him, at least, of the slightest suspicion of ever having resorted to this kind of "insincerity" to equip himself as a critic. Boyd's comments were in *Civilization in the United States*, the 1922 manifesto in which thirty of the new writers summed up the work of preparation by the insurgent generation and presented the program that was to be carried out in the rest of the decade.

From the time of *Civilization in the United States* on there were fewer and fewer mentions of More and Babbitt, even of the contemptuous kind. They were not even "alive" enough to serve as topical allusions. To be sure, in the successive volumes of *The Greek Tradition* More was making a contribution to philosophy and religion unsurpassed in our day; but the gentlemen of the press could hardly be expected to be aware of this. Babbitt published *Democracy and Leadership*, in 1924, probably the weightiest book ever written by an American, but it received hardly more discussion than the routine objections from the now universally "liberal" critical press. That is, in this country; in England it was quickly recognized that "no books comparable for knowledge and passion and social gravity have been published in our day amongst us. For anything like them we have to go back as far as Burke". Mr. Hartley Grattan, reviewing the book in the *Nation*, was forced to admit "the brilliance with which he states the necessity for considering the problem of

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leadership and the brilliance with which he sets up his procedure for arriving at standards". But in the end he damned it because Babbitt has not gone to modern psychology and sociology for his wisdom. Mr. Lewis Mumford, in the New York *Post*, went so far as to say of the book, "lucid, temperate, equable in his judgment—if one forget the bête noire of Rousseau—Mr. Babbitt is perhaps our most valuable critic of democracy".

Democracy and Leadership called forth from Mencken the only discussion of Babbitt I have seen of his. Mencken must have been surprised to find himself announcing that "there is a great deal of valuable matter in it, and the matter is presented with no little art. . . . It delivers a well-aimed and effective blow at the central fallacy of democracy, at all the stale sentimentalism which now passes for profundity in Christendom, at the whole degraded buffoonery of Americanism". This last must have surprised Professor Babbitt somewhat, also. Mencken mingled his near-appreciation with some typical obtuseness. For instance, to say of Babbitt that "what he argues for, in a few words, is a return to Christianity", is to prove oneself incapable of grasping almost the main point about a contemporary as distinguished for his clarity as for his vigor. The same thing is attested when Mencken falls into the popular fallacy of supposing that Babbitt's attitude toward Rousseau is that of "blaming him for all the sorrows of the world"; impelling Mencken to state solemnly that he does not think Rousseau was really the source of everything modern.

But the most amusing illustration of Mencken's inability to rise to the occasion of reviewing a book of Babbitt's concerns Mencken's youthful enthusiasm, Nietzsche, out of the narrow orbit of whose ideas he has never been able to make his way. I have spoken of Mencken's curious adventures with Paul Elmer More and Nietzsche. The present case is similar. Mencken quotes this sentence from *Democracy and Leadership*: "As against the expansionists of every kind, I do not hesitate to affirm that what is specifically human in man and ultimately divine is a certain quality of will, a will that is felt in its relation to the ordinary self as a will to refrain". Mencken goes on to comment: "In other words, Be hard! It is astonishing, indeed, that a man with such ideas should be so hostile to Nietzsche, as Dr. Babbitt more than once shows himself to be. I can only guess that his acquaintance with the Naumburg sorcerer must be rather superficial—that what he knows of him he has gathered at second hand, perhaps from Dr. More. Let him read *The Antichrist* and *Thus Spake Zarathustra*: he will find in them a clear statement of the ideas he seems to be groping for—a particular and eloquent description of the standards he talks of so vaguely", etc. From this, two facts emerge that decorate the record nicely. First, that Mencken has all along been a champion of that much-scorned tenet of the humanists, the will to refrain. And second, that as late as 1924, at the ripe age of forty-four, Mencken could still in all seriousness recommend Nietzsche as a source of wisdom to Babbitt.

But aside from these isolated comments provoked by the appearance of a book, both Babbitt and More were considered out of the picture as the decade got under way. The "kind" words just quoted from these critics fundamentally hostile show the drift. The dismissal of the two older critics was beginning to be thought so complete that the triumphant insurrectionists could afford to forget the business of maintaining the myth, and could even be "generous." It was at this time that Stuart Sherman went to New York and made clear to all week by week in the *Tribune* that the only known disciple of the die-hards had deserted them. Clearly, their cause was forever lost.

This was the mood in which Edmund Wilson delivered himself of some words on More in the *New Republic* in 1925. "Now that the fortress of Mr. Paul Elmer More's

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critical reputation has been thrice taken and razed to the ground," he said, "we may perhaps reconsider his merits and discover in him a very able man. Mr. More is not to be trusted with works of art but he is a master of ideas—one of the few we have." But Wilson quickly makes it clear that More's mastery is of wrong ideas exclusively. In one of his two examples he does this by the familiar trick of attributing an absurdity to More and then proving its absurdity: "A work of art," he says More has told us, "should be first of all a contribution to a reasonable morality." Naturally, he omits page references for this.

Wilson's other example is equally misrepresentational, but more complex, being an echo of the old Van Wyck Brooks charge: "Mr. More and Professor Babbitt and Mr. W. C. Brownell, for all their earnestness and their learning, have been preaching discipline and restraint to a race already bound hand and foot". It was this mistake of More's "which has made it so easy for the literary public in his own country to discard him after all his accomplishment". For, says Wilson, "what the literati were suffering from was certainly inhibition". On the contrary, as I have tried to show, what they were suffering from was certainly complacent ignorance on a vast scale. "When men like Mencken and Van Wyck Brooks came along and urged the Americans to expand and express themselves, there arose at once a generation of novelists and poets to call Brooks and Mencken blessed." Exactly. And look at the novels and poems. And look, if you can, at the books of Mencken and Brooks.

The following year, in the All Star Literary Vaudeville, published anonymously in the *New Republic*, Wilson returned to the theme. In the short space of three sentences he was able to achieve these four critical howlers: "we have produced no literary critic of the full European stature"; Paul More's "prose is quite graceless and charmless"; his point of view is "a product of Puritan rationalism"; he is "hopelessly deficient in aesthetic sensibility". Wilson was merely showing himself to be uninformed about the leading figures in his own field in his own time and country. At the same time he was obviously not trying to kill off More in the old myth-making manner, but instead trying to be as generous as possible, saying More "remains our only professional critic whose learning is really great and whose efforts are ambitious", and speaking of his "deep and serious conviction". But amid such obtuseness his praise seems of condescension.

A more convincing attempt at appreciation on the part of an "enemy" was that of Lewis Mumford, written the next year for the *Herald-Tribune*. The article, done with Mr. Mumford's usual force and vividness, sums up this second period of the journalistic reputation of Irving Babbitt and Paul Elmer More, that of complete defeat tempered by occasional reminiscent approbation. Mumford analyses very well one phase of the opposition to the older men: the failure to distinguish them from the representatives of the prevailing provincial stuffiness: "These excellent gentlemen were effigies that we dragged mercilessly through the streets, attacked with the daggers of revolt, and on occasion made a bonfire of. There was something that represented mildew in American letters, the mildew of closed parlors with lace doilies and embroidered texts, the mildew of nice sentiments and gentlemanly blandness, and looking around for some living figures to sum up in their persons all the qualities we detested, we lighted upon the critics of an older day".

Then he tells of finally coming to read them without rancor and without fear of contamination. "I discovered that Mr. More, for example, was a man of extraordinary tact and resolute good judgment in every matter that pertains to literature. . . . Within the limits of his social prejudices no one has, since Sainte-Beuve perhaps, shown a finer capacity to get to the heart of a writer and discover what is sound and permanent in his

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work." By the allusion to "social prejudices" Mumford wants to make it clear that his own social prejudices are different from More's, More having the "opacity and harshness" of a Tory, and Mumford having of course the rosy vision and mushiness of a "liberal". But even here Mumford can find no fault with More's literary criticism, but "quite adequate sympathy for writers like Thoreau and Whitman and Samuel Butler".

He treats Babbitt similarly. "We were equally obtuse in keeping at bay Mr. Babbitt. Far from representing a mildewed and moribund tradition, Mr. Babbitt has been, if anything, a little too precipitate and fiery. . . . Mr. Babbitt is a man who is passionate about ideas, and, after all, passion was one of the things our generation demanded in its revolt, even if the ideas happened to be erroneous. . . . No one could be more intransigeant than Mr. Babbitt; had the weaker members of our generation known him better they might not perhaps have made so many knock-kneed compromises."

But Mumford quickly shows that his appreciation comes from a truly remarkable extension of his power of sympathy, quite separate from his underlying convictions and not accompanied by insight. In excusing what he himself calls the "stupid" rejection of the older men he repeats the whole set of stale absurdities of Randolph Bourne and Van Wyck Brooks. He talks about our servile society, our great medley of races and traditions, the American language, the Puritan morality, the life of the pioneers, in the exact accents of 1917-1918, having made no slightest step toward getting perspective on these important themes in ten years. "As one looks back upon that work of the older critics during the last twenty years, this is perhaps one's capital impression: it is mainly irrelevant", he says, all the while proving as conclusively as ever did Bourne, Brooks or Mencken that the irrelevance is purely personal, that he has not begun to grasp what they have been saying.

He is even capable of writing this, which can only be characterized as vicious nonsense: "Against the insurgent forces that sought to humanize industry and subordinate property values to vital ones, Mr. Paul Elmer More showed only an obstinate interest in the *rentiers* who lived, in chaste seclusion, off dividends from the dark satanic mills of Lawrence or Fall River".

That kind of wanton disregard of patent facts, that wild appeal to ugly prejudices and cruel passions, was bad enough in Bourne and Brooks, who at least had the excuse of being so immersed in the stresses of a movement that they could not see beyond it; it was rather worse when it became an oratorical device in Francis Hackett; but for a man of the abilities of Lewis Mumford—the superior, it seems to me, of both Bourne and Brooks in nearly every way, in intellect, in balance, in breadth, in literary skill: probably the most diversely brilliant figure that has risen in our criticism in recent years—for him to be able to write that way in 1927 is as black an indictment as the generation of the 1920's has received, and is an almost fatal indictment of the man himself.

Mumford's article appeared in November, 1927, and, as I have said, may be taken as a summary of the journalistic reputation of Paul Elmer More and Irving Babbitt as it stood a few years after the men of the twenties had come bursting on the scene. "They were able men, but they had nothing to say to the men of today", was the burden of the most generous comments that the representative critics could pen. As it turned out, however, this elegiac note was somewhat premature. Only a few weeks after Mumford's appraisal, events were to prove not only that More and Babbitt were alive, but that beneath the surface their work had been making steady progress of the kind that endures.

(*The second part of this paper, "The End of the Anti-Humanist Myth", will appear next month.*)

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